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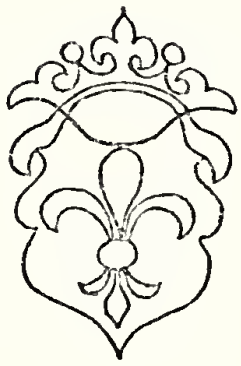
# WILLIAM RITTENHOUSE AND MOSES DISSINGER

## TWO EMINENT PENNSYLVANIA GERMANS



William Rittenhouse, America's Pioneer Paper Manufacturer and Mennonite Minister

BY MILTON RUBINCAM

Moses Dissinger, Evangelist and Patriot

BY THOMAS R. BRENDLE

V.58

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# FOREWORD

For the last sixty-eight years the Pennsylvania German Society has interpreted in a scholarly manner the customs and contributions of the Pennsylvania Germans, a sturdy American group of people who have migrated to every State of the Union and beyond. A summary of the 58 volumes which it has published indicates the breadth and depth of the achievements of the Pennsylvania German Society. One of its publications, the monumental *Pennsylvania German Pioneers,* issued in three volumes in 1934, cost in excess of $30,000 for research alone. The Society's forty-sixth and fifty-fourth volumes contained numerous illustrations in full color, executed at considerable expense, forcefully documenting some of the contributions of Pennsylvania German folk art.

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During the last thirty years things Pennsylvania German have come into much prominence, often under the term "Pennsylvania Dutch." A number of excellent articles, special studies, and books, in popular vein, have appeared. Among these are Fredric Klees' *The Pennsylvania Dutch,* Macmillan Company, 1950, and *The Pennsylvania Germans,* edited by Ralph Wood, Princeton University Press, 1942. Works of a more technical nature, such as *A Pennsylvania German Grammar,* by Albert F. Buffington and Preston A. Barba, published in 1954 by Schlechter's in Allentown, Pennsylvania, have also appeared. A Pennsylvania German cookbook by Ann Hark and Preston A. Barba and another by Mary E. Showalter which came off the press in 1950 attract much attention.

This commendable interest has unfortunately been paralleled by the activities of some persons who attempt to capitalize on the widespread interest in the Pennsylvania

Germans but do so without any background in or understanding of the subject.

This volume contains two important contributions by authors who have lived for many years with their respective subjects. Mr. Milton Rubincam, of Washington, D. C., has long been studying, in German and in English, the European background of the seventeenth and eighteenth century German emigrants to Pennsylvania, and, in particular William Rittenhouse who arrived in Germantown, from the Netherlands, in 1688 or 1689.

Reverend Thomas R. Brendle of Egypt, Pennsylvania, the distinguished and versatile Secretary of our Society, has followed the life and contributions of Moses Dissinger for more than twenty years. Last year he made numerous contacts in order to further evaluate his findings and consolidate them into a definitive study of an amazing personality.

To Reverend William J. Rupp, Vice President and Chairman of the Publications Committee, and to the other two Members of his Committee, Andrew S. Berky and John A. Hostetler, a great deal of credit is due for the quality of this volume.

*Homer T. Rosenberger*
*President*

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# CONTENTS

WILLIAM RITTENHOUSE, AMERICA'S PIONEER PAPER-MANUFACTURER AND MENNONITE MINISTER

*By Milton Rubincam*


*Foreword* ..... v
William Rittenhouse: A Characterization ..... 1
Origin of the Rittenhouse Family ..... 4
The Ancestral Homeland of the Rittenhouses ..... 6
William Rittenhouse's Family Circle in Germany and The Netherlands ..... 16
The Founding of a Great American Industry ..... 24
America's First Mennonite Minister ..... 47
William Rittenhouse's Family and Descendants ..... 60
Honors to America's First Paper Maker ..... 86


MOSES DISSINGER, EVANGELIST AND PATRIOT

*By Thomas R. Brendle*


*Preface* ..... 93
Ancestors ..... 95
Early Life and Conversion ..... 107
On the Battle Line ..... 113
For the Union ..... 127
A Co-Worker Looks at Mose ..... 133
Memorabilia ..... 137
His Parentage and Place of Birth ..... 137
The Holben Stories ..... 160
Der "Mose" Dissinger ..... 169
Remembered ..... 173
Two Nonagenarians ..... 177
*Bibliography* ..... 188

# WILLIAM RITTENHOUSE

*America's Pioneer Paper-Manufacturer and Mennonite Minister*

BY MILTON RUBINCAM

# WILLIAM RITTENHOUSE: A CHARACTERIZATION

ONE of the difficult tasks of the biographer of William Rittenhouse (1644-1708) is to appraise a man about whom little is really known. In spite of the biographical sketches and the accounts of him in histories of paper manufacture and of the American Mennonite Church that have been published during the past half century, we have only these facts about him: (1) He was born in Germany in 1644; (2) if he was not born in, certainly his youth was spent in the lordship of Broich and the duchy of Berg; (3) he lived in the Netherlands from about 1678 to 1688; (4) he built the first paper mill in the British colonies in 1690; (5) he was chosen the first minister of the Mennonite Church in America; (6) he died in February 1708; and (7) he had three children.

Seven basic facts represent most of our knowledge of the man who founded a business that is one of our most flourishing industries today!

The historian who first put together the documentation bearing on William Rittenhouse's career as a papermaker was his descendant, Honorable Horatio Gates Jones. With painstaking care he examined the original papers that were still in the Rittenhouse family's possession, and in 1863 he delivered an address on the history of the Rittenhouse paper mill before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; his paper was not published until 1896, three years after his death. *All subsequent accounts of Rittenhouse and his achievement must necessarily be traced to Senator Jones's article.* The salient facts relating to Rittenhouse's activ-

ities as a clergyman were published in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* in 1933 and 1934 by Dr. Harold S. Bender, and in 1937 by John C. Wenger in his admirable history of the Franconia Mennonite Conference. A few documents, of local importance, but not of world-shattering significance, have been uncovered by the present writer in the Manuscripts Department of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

It is fitting that the present biography of him, written in the light of his times—the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries—should be published, for the year 1958 marked the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his death.

*The Encyclopaedia Britannica* has described Rittenhouse as "an ambitious German papermaker". There can be no doubt that he was ambitious, and that he had vision. When some of the Dutch papermakers were following William of Orange to England on the heels of his bloodless invasion of that island, Rittenhouse did not accompany them, but turned his attention to America, where he knew he would have a monopoly of the trade. No paper mill existed in the British settlements. He was not long in closing a deal with the only printer in the Middle Colonies, William Bradford, and he secured the financial backing of wealthy and influential citizens of Philadelphia. As the years progressed, and he found that the mill operated by him and his older son, Claus (Nicholas), was a success, he bought out the other partners in the enterprise, so that by 1705 the Rittenhouses were in complete control of the business.

That William Rittenhouse and his son possessed courage and determination was shown in 1700-1701, when a flood suddenly overwhelmed their factory and swept it away. With the encouragement of William Penn himself, and the friendly support of their neighbors, they tightened their belts, went to work with a will, and soon a new mill stood

on the ruins of the old. They also broke the monopolistic hold of their old partner, William Bradford. In a rather stinging letter to the printer, Claus Rittenhouse intimated that Bradford had made no contributions toward the rebuilding of the mill, and stated that he and his father believed it would be only fair to let those who assisted them in the work of reconstruction have an opportunity to obtain its products.

William Rittenhouse's qualities of leadership were displayed by his election as the first minister of the first Mennonite Church in America. At later dates other preachers were chosen, but he continued to head the church until his death. He took his pastoral duties seriously, and proposed a plan (which was not carried out until after his death) for printing an English translation of the Mennonite Confession of Faith. His thinking was undoubtedly motivated by the fact that his co-religionists were dwelling in an English colony, and it would be desirable to have the Confession available in the language of the country.

Rittenhouse was a man of common sense and intelligence, and apparently possessed an education that well qualified him for the position he was called upon to fill. He spoke German and Dutch, and seems to have become quite familiar with English. Although he never sought public office, he was interested in local events, as his signature on a petition for a new road shows. In his own modest way, he made significant contributions to American development.

# ORIGIN OF THE RITTENHOUSE FAMILY

AMERICANS have a yearning at times for royal and noble honors. Some of us, it seems, are not content to have a simple farmer for ancestor. We must go out and annex a king or at the very least a duke or an earl or a count and claim him for progenitor. Real noblemen, on the other hand, tend to go to the opposite extreme. The writer's distant cousin, the late Baron Harold de Bildt, Swedish Minister to Egypt, once commented in a letter to the author: "I do not brag about remarkable ancestry, I feel rather humble about not having achieved more myself". And in his entertaining book, *Records and Reminiscences* (1903), Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, a son of the second Duke of Sutherland, in his description of the amazingly rapid rise to peerage status of the Gowers, commented: "I wish I could think that their promotion was owing to deeds performed on land or sea, but if the truth must be told, the family has been more distinguished by their luck and by their alliances than in the senate or in the field". At several points in his narrative, Lord Ronald indicated that he did not have exactly a high regard for some of his noble forebears!

Since 1893 much nonsense has been published—and believed by gullible members of the family—concerning the Rittenhouses' pre-American antecedents. In that year Daniel Kolb Cassel, who was described by the late Governor Pennypacker as "a well-meaning but illiterate and entirely untrained old man",[1] issued a work bearing the awe-

1 Samuel Whitaker Pennypacker, *The Autobiography of a Pennsylvanian* (1918), p. 147.

inspiring title, *A Genea-Biographical History of the Rittenhouse Family and All Its Branches in America, with Sketches of their Descendants, from the Earliest Available Records to the Present Time, Including the Birth of Wilhelm in 1644.*

Mr. Cassel gave two conflicting versions of the Rittenhouse family's origin. On pages xxxi-xxxv he traced the line of descent from the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (died in 1519), and assigned to his great-grandson, Emperor Maximilian II (died in 1576), a son who bore the name of Conrad Rittershausen (1560-1613). On pages 28-31 he gave the correct line of the Rittershausen family from Heinrich Rittershausen (died in 1558) of the Duchy of Brunswick, through his son Balthasar (1535-1602), grandson Conrad (1560-1613), and great-grandson Georg (born in 1595, still living in August 1664). To the latter he assigned a son, Georg, who, he said, was born about 1620 and was the first of the family to embrace the Mennonite faith. This second Georg, he asserted, was the father of the American founder, Wilhelm Rittinghausen (William Rittenhouse).

The name Rittershausen originated in 1591, Cassel continues chattily, when Maximilian II's son, Matthias (afterwards Emperor) was knighted by his cousin, Ferdinand III and was given the name "Sir Rittershausen."

There are certain difficulties which make it slightly awkward to accept either of these pedigrees:

(1) Emperor Maximilian II, by his wife and cousin, Archduchess Maria, had fifteen children, of whom the nine sons were named: Ferdinand (died in infancy); Rudolf (afterwards Emperor Rudolf II, 1576-1612); Ernst (Governor of Hungary and the Netherlands; died unmarried); Matthias (Emperor from 1612 to 1619); Maximilian (very briefly King of Poland); Albrecht (Cardinal, Governor of Portugal and the Netherlands); Wenzel (died aged 17);

Friedrich (died in infancy); and Karl (died in infancy).[2] *If the Emperor had a son Conrad (Konrad), it was a closely guarded secret, known only to Mr. Cassel 317 years later.*

(2) It is true that Matthias signalized himself for bravery in the war against the Turks in 1593 (not in 1591, as Cassel has it), but we venture to suggest that it was utterly impossible for him to have been knighted by his cousin, Emperor Ferdinand III, in 1591 (or in 1593), in view of the fact that Ferdinand was not born until 1608. The Habsburgs were clever, but even *they* had their limitations!

(3) Georg Rittershausen, son of Conrad (1560-1613), married (1626) Ursula Rosina Stadtmann, by whom he had eight children, his four sons being; Conrad Burghart, Hieronymus Nicolaus, Theodorus Laurentius, and Adam Friedrich. If he had a son Georg, born in 1620 (as affirmed by Cassel), Ursula certainly was not the lad's mother, for he married her six years later. As none of the European investigators of the Rittershausen family have found evidehce to suspect Georg of having children by any girl except his wife, we must conclude that Georg (born in 1620) was another figment of Mr. Cassel's overworked imagination.

We have been careful to analyze in detail the weak links in Mr. Cassel's conflicting pedigrees, for it is amazing to find that a number of William Rittenhouse's descendants still persist in believing that he was (a) a great-great-grandson of Emperor Maximilian II, or (b) at best, a scion of the non-royal but patrician Rittershausens.

Cassel's statements concerning William Rittenhouse's ancestors were first exposed fifty years ago by the late Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee, who conducted personal researches in Germany and the Netherlands. Unfortunately,

2 "Stammtafel der Habsburger," appended to *Lost Waltz, A Story of Exile,* by Bertita Harding (1944); William Coxe, F.R.S., F.A.S., *History of the House of Austria* (1888), vol. II, pp. 58-62.

she never published her findings.[3] The American genealogist who must be credited with first blasting in print the Habsburg-Rittershausen line was Mrs. Olive Barrick Rowland in her book, *An Ancestral Chart and Handbook* (1935). On pages 83-93 she published the records of the Rittershausen family, which demonstrated conclusively that Georg Rittershausen *had no son named Georg, born in 1620.* To the December 1938 issue of the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* Dr. Calvin I. Kephart contributed an article, "Rittenhouse Genealogy Debunked" —a title which shocked a number of people at the time. He analyzed the name, which had been spelled variously Rettenhouse, Rettinghousen, etc. by Pennsylvania and New Jersey members of the family. He reached the conclusion that it had no connection with the surname of Rittershausen, which means "House of Knights"; he deduced its origin as *Rödinghausen* (pronounced generally as Rettinghousen), which signifies "house of the son of Roth", *i.e.* the red-haired man. This is a logical conclusion, which the writer accepts.

The Cassel claims to imperial and noble grandeur have also been the subject of study by the Rittershausen Family Association of Germany, which regards it as "das amerikanische Problem". Carl Rittershausen truly commented, in the Christmas 1954 issue of his association's periodical, that Cassel had "caught" William Rittenhouse's father's name, Georg, "entirely from the air" (*völlig aus der Luft gegriffen).*[4]

In its original form, Rittenhouse is a place name, and may be identified with one or more of the following localities: (1) *Rödinghausen,* a village on the southern slope of the Wiehen Mountains, in Kreis Herford, present State of Nordrhein-Westfalen (North Rhine-Westphalia); it is very

3 Dr. McGee's papers relating to her Rittenhouse researches in Europe are at present in the writer's possession.

4 *Mitteilungsblatt des Familienverbandes der Rittershaus(en),* Nr. 23, Weihnachten 1954, p. 410.

ancient, being of record as early as 805-809 A.D.; (2) *Rittinghausen,* a farm near Lüdenscheid, on the Lenne River, a tributary of the Ruhr; (3) *Rödinghausen,* a village on the Honne, another tributary of the Ruhr, southwest of Menden and southeast of Dortmund; and (4) *Rüddinghausen,* in Oberhessen, present State of Hessen, between Homburg on the Ohm and Allendorf on the Lumbda.[5] These places do not necessarily have any connection with each other, although the suggestion has been made[6] that they were settled in medieval times by members of the same family. The noble von Rödinghausen family is of record since the 13th century,[7] but the Rittenhouse family could have stemmed not only from this baronial line but from one of many families of lesser rank which took its name from its place of residence at the time surnames were adopted. In the absence of documentary evidence, we make no claims to a noble origin for the American family.

5 *Ritters Geographisch-Statistisches Lexikon* (1910), vol. 11, p. 703; Calvin I. Kephart, "Rittenhouse Genealogy Debunked," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly,* vol. XXVI, no. 4, Dec. 1938, p. 109.

6 Kephart, *op. cit.,* p. 109.

7 Anton Fahne, *Geschichte der westphälischen Geschlechter* (1858), p. 339.

# THE ANCESTRAL HOMELAND OF THE RITTENHOUSES

MUELHEIM, the home of the Rittenhouses in the seventeenth century, is on the Ruhr River, about seven miles west from Essen. It is a highly industrialized place, with blastfurnaces, rolling-mills, and engine-works. Among its numerous industries are iron works, cotton, leather, tobacco, paper, and beer. Its real importance began toward the end of the eighteenth century with the development of coal shipments from the Ruhr mines to the Rhine. Mülheim passed to the control of Prussia in 1815, and was part of the Prussian Rhine Province until the close of World War II, when it became a part of the State of Nordrhein-Westfalen (North Rhine-Westphalia). In 1943-45 it was heavily bombed by the Allies, as it was one of the industrial centers of the Ruhr Valley. The parish church of St. Peter dates from the 11th century, and the nearby castles of Broich and Styrum date from the 11th and 13th centuries, respectively. This Mülheim should not be confused with other towns of the same name, especially the well-known Mülheim am Rhein. In 1891 it was recorded that in the then Rhine Province were seven Mülheims, two in Westphalia, two in Bavaria, and three in Württemberg.[1]

At the time of Wilhelm Rittinghausen's birth in 1644, Mülheim was situated in the lordship of Broich (Bruch),

1 *Müllers Grosses Deutsches Ortsbuch* (1953), p. 741; *Der Grosse Brockhaus* (1955), vol. 8, p. 179; *Nouveau Dictionnaire de Géographie Universelle* (1887), vol. 3, p. 1060; *Ritters Geographisch-Statistisches Lexikon* (1910), vol. II, p. 309; Oberlehrer a.D. Klanke and Pfarrer Dr. Richter, *Geschichte der bergischen Unterherrschaft Broich sowie der Stadt Mülheim an der Ruhr* (1891), pp. 14, 15; Norman J. G. Pounds, *The Ruhr. A Study in Historical and Economic Geography* (1952), p. 44.

3 1833 02144 1396

which extended east to the nunnery of Essen (governed by a Princess Abbess), north and west to the town of Duisburg, and south to the Abbey of Werden.[2] During the Middle Ages Broich passed through a succession of hands, but in 1508 it was inherited by the House of Daun (Dhaun), Counts of Falkenstein and Lords of Oberstein. Toward the close of the century the lordship became embroiled in the affairs of Spain, which was trying to subdue its rebellious Netherland provinces. Since 1584 Spanish troops had repeatedly used Broich as a thoroughfare for its troops marching to and from the Low Countries. Wirich VI of Daun, Count of Falkenstein and Lord of Broich, who had attempted to follow a policy of neutrality, was murdered in 1598 while Broich was occupied by Spanish forces.[3]

The last representative in the male line of the House of Daun to rule in Broich was Count Wilhelm Wirich, who governed for fifty-nine years. He entered lustily into the feuds of the period; one of his quarrels took place when Wilhelm Rittinghausen was seven years old. In 1651 he waged a private war with Anna Salome, Princess Abbess of Essen. He gathered together a mob of many hundreds who, by horse and on foot, amid the blowing of trumpets and the beating of drums, invaded the territories of the Princess Abbess. They cut down many trees, among them fruit trees, which, we gather, were the pride of the Princess Abbess. Homes were plundered, provisions were stolen and disposed of by the ravenous Broichers, and everything was ruined by the marauders.

However, a few years later, in 1654, the Princess Abbess Anna Salome had her revenge. Her troops seized in a violent manner the common highway connecting the lordship of Broich with the dominions of Essen "to the disadvantage

2 Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee's notes, made while she was conducting researches in Germany.

3 Sketches of Count Wirich VI in *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*, vol. V (1877), pp. 113-115; and *Neue deutsche Biographie*, vol. 3 (1957), p. 530.

of the Broicher subjects", and also seized a Mülheimer's horse. The Princess Abbess was later required to restore the animal to its owner.[4]

Count Wilhelm Wirich has a special interest for us, for it was with him that William Penn had a most animated discussion in 1677. Penn and a group of Quakers were on their way from Holland to Mülheim to visit the Count's daughter, who was rumored to be friendly to their religious persuasion. As they passed by the castle of Broich they were suddenly accosted by the Count himself. Penn tells the story graphically: "But not showing him, or paying him that worldly Homage and Respect which was expected from us, some of his Gentlemen ask'd us, if we knew whom we were before? and if we did not use to deport ourselves after another manner before noble-men, and in the presence of Princes? We answered, we were not conscious to our selves of any Disrespect or unseemly Behaviour; one of them sharply replied, Why don't you put off your Hats then? is it respect to stand covered in the presence of the Sovereign of the Country. We told them it was our practice in the presence of our Prince, who is a great King, and that we uncovered not our Heads to any but to the Almighty God." One did not speak thus in the presence of Wilhelm Wirich von Daun, Count of Falkenstein, Lord of Broich and Oberstein, and of other places. He had as exalted an opinion of his own dignity as any of the thousands of other princelings and lordlings of the Empire. In anger he called them "Quakers", which to him was a term of derision, and he ordered them out of his dominions—as a further inducement to leave, he commanded his soldiers to escort them thence. And so William Penn and his comrades departed for Duisburg, guarded by the troops of the Lord of Broich. A messenger overtook the band of Englishmen and handed Penn a note from the

[4] Klanke and Richter, *Geschichte der bergischen Unterherrschaft Broich sowie der Stadt Mülheim an der Ruhr* (1891), pp. 144-146.

Count's daughter, who said she "was much greieved at the Entertainment of her Father toward us, advising us not to expose our selves to such Difficulties and Hardships as it would grieve her Heart, that any that came in the Love of God to visit her, should be so severely handled; for at some he sets his Dogs, upon others his Souldiers to beat them. . . ."[5]

This pleasant lord of the Rittinghausens, whose stern and uncompromising countenance glares at us from the pages of Klanke and Richter's history of Broich and Mülheim, was twice married; by his first wife he had four sons and four daughters. The sons all predeceased him, one of them, Karl Alexander, being murdered by another nobleman in 1659, when he was in his 17th year.

The Count's eldest daughter, Anna Elisabeth, was also married twice, her first husband being Count Johann Ludwig of Leiningen-Günthersblum, and her second the Wild- and Rheingrave Georg Friedrich. The second daughter, Christine Luise, was the wife of Count Emich Christian of Leiningen-Dagsburg. The third daughter, Charlotte Auguste, made quite a plebeian match—her husband was the Calvinist Pastor Siebel (Sibelius), who died in 1698 as Court Preacher at Cleve. Count Wilhelm Wirich died on August 22, 1682, and on the following 9th of October these three daughters were enfeoffed with his possessions by Count Palatine Philipp Wilhelm of Neuburg (afterwards Elector Palatine of the Rhine) in his capacity of Duke of Jülich and Berg. The lordship of Broich continued to be held by the House of Leiningen until 1766, when it passed to the ruling family of Hessen-Darmstadt, and finally, in 1815, to Prussia.[6] It is interesting to note that the beautiful Queen Luise of Prussia, who suffered so much humiliation

5 *An Account of W. Penn's Travails in Holland and Germany, Anno MDCLXXVII, For the Service of the Gospel of Christ, by Way of Journal. Containing also Divers Letters and Epistles writ to several Great and Eminent Persons whilst there* (1694), pp. 117-123.

6 Klanke and Richter, *op. cit.*, p. 39; Prof. Dr. Ernst Heinrich Kneschke, *Neues allgemeines Deutsches Adels-Lexikon*, vol. 3 (1861), p. 201. The Count's young-

at the hands of Napoleon, spent a portion of her girlhood in the castle of Broich, across the Ruhr from Mülheim.

In the complicated feudal system which was the Holy Roman Empire, the Rittinghausens owed allegiance to a lord greater even than the irascible Count Wilhelm Wirich. The duchy of Berg, in which the lordship of Broich was situated, was bounded on the north by the duchy of Cleve, on the east by the county of the Mark, on the south by the counties of Sayn and Wied, and on the west by the archbishopric-electorate of Cologne, from which it was separated by the river Rhine. A writer of 1695 described it as a very mountainous country (hence its Latin name, *Ducatus Montensis;* the Mountainous Duchy) and full of woods in the eastern portion. That part of the principality which lay along the Rhine was more fertile than the rest. The industry of the inhabitants contributed very materially to enrich the country.[7] The principal towns in Berg were Düsseldorf, which had been the capital of the country since 1385; Solingen, on the Wipper River; Mülheim, on the Rhine; Wipperfurt, on the Wipper; Siegburg, a little above the confluence of the Sieg and the Agger Rivers; Gerrisheim, near Düsseldorf; and Blankenheim, on the Sieg. In a map published in 1647, Mülheim on the Ruhr is not shown, which fact indicates that it was a small and insignificant place when the Rittinghausens lived there. Broich is shown, of course, but almost disguised under the name of Broek.[8]

Berg became a countship in 1108 and a duchy in 1380. The ruling house increased its territorial possessions during the Middle Ages by the acquisition of the counties of

est daughter, Amelia Sibylle, had already (May 1682) renounced her right of succession to his lands.

7 Jean-Baptiste d'Audiffret, *Histoire et Géographie Ancienne et Moderne,* vol. III (1685), p. 300.

8 *Ibid.,* vol. III, p. 300; Martin Zeiller, *Topographia Westphaliae. Das ist, Beschreibung der Vornembsten vnd bekanntisten Stätte, vnd Plätz, vn Hochlobl. Westphälischen Craise* (1647), pp. 21, 22, 84, 91, and the map of the Circle of Westphalia in the front of the book.

Altena, the Mark, and Ravensberg, and, in 1437, the duchy of Jülich. Less than a century later Duke Johann of Jülich and Berg succeeded as Duke of Cleve. One of his daughters, Anne, became the fourth wife of King Henry VIII of England (1540). This German princess, who could speak no language but her own, was so unattractive in appearance that her matrimonially-inclined bridegroom soon had the marriage dissolved. She fared better than some of his other wives, for she survived him, dying in 1557; the remains of this daughter of the ruling House of Cleve, Jülich, and Berg lie in Westminster Abbey.

The last ruler of the three duchies of the old dynasty was the imbecile Johann Wilhelm, who succeeded in 1592. He died without issue on March 25, 1609, his demise thus paving the way for a flock of vultures to swoop upon his territories, which were described as "one of the largest and wealthiest principalities of Germany".[9] The quarrel was finally settled by the Treaty of Xanten (1614), whereby the two chief claimants, Johann Sigismund, the Protestant Elector of Brandenburg, succeeded to Cleve, Mark, and Ravensberg, and the recent convert to Catholicism, Wolfgang Wilhelm, Count Palatine of Neuburg, inherited Jülich and Berg.

Thus, the homeland of the Rittenhouses came under the sway of a branch of the romantic House of Wittelsbach, which three times mounted the Imperial Throne, gave a line of kings to Sweden in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and ruled Bavaria until the overthrow of King Ludwig III in 1918.

In 1644, the year of Wilhelm Rittinghausen's birth, Wolfgang Wilhelm, the successful claimant of Jülich and Berg, was still alive—and still quarreling with Brandenburg, then represented by the Great Elector, Friedrich Wilhelm of Hohenzollern. The immediate feudal over-

9 Johannes Janssen, *History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages*, translated by A. M. Christie, vol. X, p. 426.

lord of the Rittinghausens was still Count Wilhelm Wirich of Falkenstein, Lord of Daun, Oberstein, and Broich, whose coat-of-arms, incidentally, today forms a part of the municipal coat-of-arms of Mülheim. The nominal ruler of the Empire in 1644 was Ferdinand III, by the grace of God "duly appointed Emperor, perpetual Augmenter of the Realm in Germany, King of Hungary, Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy", etc., etc., who was *not* a cousin of Wilhelm Rittinghausen's, in spite of the weird claims advanced in his behalf.

# WILLIAM RITTENHOUSE'S FAMILY CIRCLE IN GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS

PREACHER Jacob Gaedtschalck, writing his sketch of the beginnings of the Mennonite church at Germantown about 1712, stated that his deceased colleague, Preacher William Rittenhouse, was a native of *Mongowerland.* This place may be identified with *Monschauerland,* or Land of Monschau. There are several places named Monschau. One such place, the writer has been informed by Dr. Calvin Kephart, has been merged with Ronsdorf, now a part of Wuppertal-Ronsdorf. As Wuppertal is near Düsseldorf and Essen, in the same area as Broich and Mülheim, it is logical to believe that this Monschau is the place mentioned by Gaedtschalck as Rittenhouse's birthplace.

On the other hand, the Monschau now a part of Wuppertal-Ronsdorf does not coincide with Monschauer*land.* The *Land* indicates that it was a territory, not just a town. If we are to take Gaedtschalck's statement literally, it would appear that Rittenhouse was born in the lordship of Monschau *(Monschauerland),* which is better known under its old name of *Montjoie.* The latter name is taken from *Mons Jovis* (Jove's mountain), and in the days of the Roman occupation two thousand years ago there was a stronghold where now stands the medieval fortress of Monschau. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the lordship of Montjoie was held by the House of Limburg; in the next two centuries its rulers came from the families of Falkenburg and Schönforst. Late in the fifteenth century it was added to the possessions of the Dukes of Jülich-Berg,

and so passed in 1614, by the Treaty of Xanten, to Wolfgang Wilhelm of Neuburg, of the House of Wittelsbach. In 1622 Montjoie was temporarily occupied by the Spaniards. Its master was still Wolfgang Wilhelm in 1644, when William Rittenhouse was born.[1]

Monschau (Montjoie) is presently in the State of Nordrhein-Westfalen, in the governmental district of Aachen, very close to the Belgian border. It is farther from Broich and Mülheim, the known homes of Rittenhouse, than the Monschau which now is part of Wuppertal-Ronsdorf, but it is the only place that can be identified with Preacher Gaedtschalck's Mongowerland.

Persons named Rittinghaus(en) or Rettinghaus(en) have lived at Mülheim or in its vicinity at least since the seventeenth century. Magreit Rittinghaus married Jan vom Brühl there on August 11, 1654.[2] She *may* have been Wilhelm's sister who was mentioned (but not named) in a document of 1678, to be quoted presently. Jacob Rittinghaus, a *Schöpfer* (vatman) in a paper factory at Broich had a wife named Anna Sophia; their son Arnold was baptized on April 4, 1663. An Arnold Rittinghaus was married to Gertrud Kriess on March 18, 1677.[3] An original manuscript marriage record, in the possession of Robert Rheinen, noted Mülheim historian, in 1908, showed that a certain Wilhelm Rettinghaus was married at Mülheim on October 4, 1810; he was recorded as a son of a *Pfannebäcker*, or roof tile maker.[4] In 1940 Gerhard Rettinghauss resided at Mülheim; this writer attempted to get information concerning his family, but Armin Renker, the Rheinland historian of paper making, reported that Herr

1 Hermann Prümmer, editor, *Das Monschauer Land, historisch und geographisch gesehen* (1955; published by the Geschichtsverein des Kreises Monschau), pp. 32-81; *Meyers Grosses Konversations Lexikon*, vol. 14 (1909), p. 109; *Meyers Lexikon*, vol. 7 (1939), p. 154.

2 Rowland, *An Ancestral Chart and Handbook*, p. 92.

3 Records examined at Mülheim by Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee.

4 *Ibid. Pfannebäcker* is the original form of the Pennsylvania German surname Pennypacker.

Rettinghauss had no interest in family lore and was not disposed to assist our researches. Recent city directories of Essen and Düsseldorf reveal that today families named Rettinghaus (en) are living in those communities.

The extant baptismal records in the Mülheim church registers begin with 1658, and a gap occurs in the marriage records for the period 1638-54. Consequently, all efforts to ascertain Wilhelm Rittinghausen's record of baptism in 1644 and the names and date of marriage of his parents have been futile.

We do know, from a record of 1678, that the American settler's mother was named Maria Hagerhoff. The assumption is that this is her maiden name, not the name of a second husband, since in the seventeenth century German and Dutch women were often called by their maiden names and not by their husband's names.

When she was making her personal researches at Mülheim in 1908, Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee found numerous records of the Hagerhoff family, but the records were insufficient to determine the parentage and ancestry of Wilhelm Rittinghausen's mother. A farm named Hagerhoff was held in the sixteenth century by Heinrich im Hagerhoff and his wife Drude (Gertrude). Subsequent possessors of this property were Gosven in dem Hagerhoffe and his wife Eva, to whom it was leased by the Lord of Broich on March 26, 1574; and Hermann in dem Hagerhoff and his wife Elsken (Elsa), who leased it on March 26, 1585. In the following century, Tigges Hagerhoff of Nussbaum at Speldorf (near Broich) made his annual payment of two thalers on the farm and also provided a carriage for the use of the Count of Falkenstein (Lord of Broich) (1650). The next year (1651) Teiss Hagerhoff was of record; he was the same as Tigges, both names being contractions of Matthias. Henrechen (Heinrich) Hagerhoff gave four stüber to the poor in 1664, and repeated this act of charity in 1665. Arnold im Hagerhoff and his wife

Gerdrut had at least two children, Anna Christina in 1668, and Nicolas in 1670.[5]

Wilhelm Rittinghausen and his brother, Heinrich Nicolaus, were both trained in the art of paper making. There was a paper mill at Mülheim at least as early as 1500.[6] On October 3, 1643, the year before Wilhelm's birth, Adolf Vorster leased the mill from the Count of Falkenstein. His family held it for a number of generations, and sold it eventually to the Dorstener Papier Fabriek, A.G. It stood until 1912, when the buildings through the doors of which the Rittinghausen brothers had walked so many times during their apprenticeship, were torn down. It is very evident that they were apprentices to the Vorsters.[7]

In or perhaps a little before 1678 Wilhelm Rittinghausen emigrated to Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, where he resolved to become a citizen. To do so it was necessary to secure a birth certificate from home. Accordingly, he communicated with his family still residing there, and the following document was issued to him:[8]

> Heinrich Nicolaus Rittinghausen, at the Chancellery of the Court of Falkenstein, in this place of Broich, respectfully declared that his brother, Wilhelm Rittinghausen, now residing in Amsterdam, does fervently demand and petition for the evidence of his age; that is to say, in what year he was born—to make use of the same in the proper place; and as there is no good reason to refuse the said request, it is hereby

5 Dr. McGee's researches at Mülheim. These data, based on the McGee notes, were included in Kephart's article, "Rittenhouse Genealogy Debunked," *Natl. Geneal. Soc. Qtrly*, Dec. 1938, pp. 106, 107.

6 Klanke and Richter, *Gesch. . . . Broich . . . Mülheim*, p. 100.

7 Armin Renker, "Zweihundertfünfzig Jahre Papiermacherei in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika. Wilhelm Rittinghausen aus Mülheim (Ruhr) ihr Begründer," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, (1939), p. 40; A. Schulte, "Heimat und Name von Wilhelm Rittinghausen, dem ersten Papiermacher der Vereinigten Staaten," *Wochenblatt für Papierfabrikation*, nr. 48, 1940, pp. 636, 637 (with a picture of the Broich paper mill in 1699). Herr Schulte is a direct descendant of Adolf Vorster.

8 Cassel, *A Genea-Biog. Hist. of Rittenhouse Fam.*, p. 47.

certified that the said Wilhelm Rittinghausen's mother, Maria Hagerhoff, who is still living in the principality of Broich, as also his sister and brother, unanimously declared and confirm that the said Wilhelm Rittinghausen was born in the year one thousand six hundred and forty-four, in consequence of which this certificate is hereby given.

*Broich, the 28th July 1678*
*(Signed)* J. RODT

*From the Chancellery of the Court of Falkenstein in the said place.*

The evidence of his age satisfied the municipal authorities, and the next year the oath of citizenship was tendered to him as follows:[9]

You do swear that you will be a good and true citizen of this city, and be subject to the Burgomasters and rulers, and take part in watches, ice openings, and other protections and burdens of this city; and that you will apprise them of any threatoning danger of which you may be informed; and that you will, by advice and act, further its welfare to the utmost of your power; and that you will perform and omit all that a good citizen should perform and omit.

*So truly may God Almighty help you.*

Willem Rüddinghüysen, of Mülheim, paper maker, took the above mentioned oath and paid the citizen fee to the Gentlemen of the Treasury.

Done in Amsterdam the 23rd June 1679.

(Signed) J. GEELRINCK.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 51. Cassel gives the date of *both* the birth certificate and the oath of citizenship as June 23, 1678, but he obviously is in error. State Senator Horatio Gates Jones, in his history of the Rittenhouse paper mill, assigns July 25, 1678, as the date of the birth certificate, and June 23, 1679, as that of the citizenship oath. Moreover, the facsimile reproduction of the oath in Cassel's genealogy clearly shows 1679 as the year in which Rittinghausen was enrolled among the citizenry of Amsterdam.

We are fortunate to have a contemporary account of this historic city of the very period when Rittinghausen was living there. An English writer described it as follows:[10]

> . . . . . It is esteemed by intelligent Men, the second City in the World for Trade, and not inferiour to any in Wealth. Certainly *Amsterdam* is one of the most beautiful Cities in the World, their Buildings are large, their Streets, for the most part pleasantly planted with Trees, and paved so neatly, as is to be found no where else in any other Country, save in some of the seventeen Provinces. . . .
>
> *AMSTERDAM* stands upon a thousand *Morgans* of Land, encompassed with a very strong Wall and *Bastions* most pleasant to behold, with a very large Burgwall or Gracht, as they call it, for the defense of three Parts of the City, the fourth being secured by the Sea or *Tye*. There are thirteen Churches in this City, for those of the Reformed Religion (called *Dutch Presbyterians)* to meet and worship in, with two *French,* one *High-dutch,* and one *English,* all *Presbyterian* Churches, who only are allowed *Bells,* and whose Ministers are maintained by the *Magistrates.* All these Churches or Congregations make up only a third Part of the Inhabitants of the City. The *Papists,* who have eighty-five Houses, or Chapels to meet in for their Worship, make another third Part. . . . The other third Part of the City is made up by *Jews, Lutherans, Arminians, Brownists* or *English Independents, Anabaptists* and the *Quakers*. . . .[11]

10 William Ker, Esq., *Remarks on the Government of several Parts of Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Hamburgh, Lubeck, and Hanseatick-Towns, but more particularly of the United Provinces, with some few Directions how to Travel in the States Dominions. Together with a List of the most considerable Cities in Europe, and number of Houses in each city.* (Printed in *Amsterdam* Anno Dom. 1688. Reprinted at *London,* 1727). pp. 23-25.

11 Mr. Ker (above) notes that neither the Catholics ("Papists") or any of the

Some time during the next decade Wilhelm and his family (for he had married in Germany a woman whose name may have been Elisabeth, and had three children, Nicolaus, Gerhard, and Elisabeth) removed to Arnhem (Arnheim), on the Rhine River, in the former duchy of Gelderland. A modern writer has described Arnhem, "with its hills and vast pine woods", as "one of the surprises of Holland. It is a charming town for a short stay, with opportunities for excursions in all directions. It stands on the north side of the broad and swiftly-flowing Rhine. Pre-eminently clean, luxurious with lawns and flower-gardens, . . . it is no wonder that the Dutch regard Arnhem as a resting place towards Paradise. . . ."[12]

The reason for Wilhelm's settling in Arnhem was due probably to the fact that his brother, Heinrich Nicolaus, had taken up his residence at nearby Velp. In the Netherlands, Heinrich Nicolaus was known as Nicolaas Rittinchuisen or Rittinghuysen. He had married a young woman named Claesken Ridders, by whom he had several children. He held the office of Alderman of Rosendaal, which adjoins Velp, and on May 3, 1692, he signed his last document in that capacity. Immediately thereafter he removed to Dordrecht (Dort), on the south side of the Merwede River, in the present province of South Holland, where he became a citizen on May 21, 1692. He died at Dordrecht in May 1718, and was buried in *De Groote Kerk* (The Great Church). By Claesken Ridders he had issue as follows:[13]

Protestant denominations, except the Dutch Reformed Church, were permitted to have bells.

12 *Guide to Holland. With map of Holland and Plans of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Leiden, Haarlem, Middleburg, Dordrecht, Arnhem and Environs, Nijmegen, Kampen, the Isle of Walcheren, the Isle of Marken, etc.*, pp. 115 ff.

13 Records received many years ago by the author from the Gemeente Archief at Dordrecht, etc. See also Kephart, *op. cit.*, pp. 107, 108.

Christina; born about 1678; married Gerrit Beekman, and had a son, Henricus Beekman, who was baptized at Dordrecht, September 13, 1696.

Neeltjen; baptized at Velp, December 26, 1679.

Adrian; baptized at Velp, November 28, 1680; apparently died young.

Maria; baptized at Velp, March 20, 1680; married Cornelis Canegies at The Hague, July 20, 1714.

Adrianus; baptized at Dordrecht, June 23, 1694; living at Amsterdam in 1778, when he was visited by William Barton, his uncle Wilhelm Rittinghausen's great-great-grandson.

Cornelis; baptized at Dordrecht, January 21, 1697.

As there are gaps in the Velp and Dordrecht church registers, it is possible that Nicolaas and Claesken had children whose names have not been recovered by our investigators in the Netherlands.

# THE FOUNDING OF A GREAT AMERICAN INDUSTRY

WHILE Willem and Nicolaas Rittinghuysen (Rüddinghuysen), as they called themselves in Dutch, were pursuing the paper making trade in Holland, events were happening overseas that were destined to have an important bearing on Willem Rittinghuysen's career.

On March 4, 1681/2, King Charles II of England granted to William Penn a vast territory in America which he called Pennsylvania, in honor of Penn's father, Admiral Sir William Penn, Knight. His Majesty was motivated by two considerations in making this grant: (1) Penn's patriotic and religious spirit, and his "commendable desire to enlarge our English Empire, and promote such useful commodities as may be of benefit to us and our Dominions, as also to reduce the savage natives by gentle and just manners to the love of civil society and Christian religion"; and (2) to reward, by emoluments to the son, the great services rendered to the Crown by his late father, Admiral Penn. At the time of the latter's death (1670), the Crown owed him about £16,000, and King Charles hoped that by this grant his indebtedness to Sir William Penn was liquidated.[1] The younger William Penn, on the other hand, saw this acquisition of a territory of princely extent as his golden opportunity to offer an asylum for the oppressed people of all nations and creeds. Pennsylvania was founded on humanitarian principles.

1 *Charter to William Penn and Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania, Passed between the Years 1682 and 1700. Preceded by Duke of York's Laws in Force from the Year 1676 to the Year 1682, with an Appendix Containing Laws Relating to the Organization of the Provincial Courts and Historical Matter* (1879), p. 465.

After the English Quakers, the first large group to take advantage of the Founder's widely-publicized venture were Germans. Under the leadership of Francis Daniel Pastorius, Germantown was founded in October 1683. Penn, who was then in Philadelphia, issued to Pastorius a warrant for 6,000 acres of land on the east side of the Schuylkill River. The new settlement was laid out with one main street sixty feet wide and the cross streets forty feet wide.[2]

Meanwhile, events of far-reaching consequences were taking place in England. King Charles II died on February 6, 1684/5, with thoughtful injunctions to his successor to take care of a mourning mistress. His brother, James, Duke of York and Albany, ascended the Throne as James II. His avowed Catholicism, his attempts at arbitrary rule, his stubbornness contributed to his ultimate repudiation by the liberty-loving, vigorously Protestant English. At The Hague King James's ambitious nephew and son-in-law, William III, Prince of Orange and Stadholder of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, kept a close watch on affairs in the island kingdom. At the appropriate time, William left Europe with his army and landed at Torbay, November 5, 1688; thence commenced the "Glorious Revolution" in England—glorious because it was bloodless. Regiment after regiment deserted the King and flocked to the invader's standards. James II fled to France. His son-in-law and daughter were proclaimed joint Sovereigns of England, on February 13, 1688/9, as King William III and Queen Mary II.

It was at about this time that in William III's own country of Holland, Willem Rittinghuysen began to direct his thoughts toward America. The suggestion has been made that his reason for leaving the Netherlands was the sudden influx of 70,000 Huguenots into the country because of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 by Louis XIV

[2] Marion Dexter Learned, Ph.D., L.H.D., *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius, The Founder of Germantown* (1908), pp. 129-133.

of France—a circumstance which made the Netherlands too crowded.[3]

This may be so, but an alternative reason presents itself. As a citizen of the United Provinces, Rittinghuysen resided under the authority of the Stadholder (President), William III, now the King of England. Many Dutch families emigrated to England as a result of the transference of the ruling house to London.

Barton, the biographer of David Rittenhouse, observed that "The Dutch were early and long distinguished for the superior quality of the paper manufactured in their country. It excelled, in its whiteness and the closeness of its texture, as well as its goodness in other respects, the paper made elsewhere, and it was an article of great importance to the republic, both for the internal consumption and for exportation, until the Hollanders were rivalled in this manufacture by the perfection to which it was afterwards brought in other parts of Europe."

He added that little besides brown paper was made in England prior to the Revolution of 1688, which seated a Dutch king on the English Throne. "Yet, soon after that period," he comments, "the English were enabled to supply themselves with much the greater part of the various kinds of paper used in their country, from their own mills; and the perfection to which the manufacture of this important article has since been carried, not only in England, but in France, Italy and Germany, has greatly diminished the consumption of Dutch paper."[4]

Barton noticed that "the establishment of paper-mills in Pennsylvania, by the Rittenhouses, was nearly co-eval with the general introduction of the manufactory of white paper in the mother country."

On the basis of the foregoing comments by Barton, we

3 Maurice Jefferis Babb, Ph.D., "David Rittenhouse," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. LVI, no. 3 (1932), p. 199.

4 William Barton, *Memoirs of the Life of David Rittenhouse, LL.D., F.R.S.* (1813), pp. 82, 83 (note 5).

believe that Rittenhouse's decision to emigrate to America was based primarily on the lack of a paper mill in the British Colonies. He was quick to realize that he would enjoy a monopoly of the paper making business in a land where he would be the sole producer of the commodity. His selection of Pennsylvania was logical. William Penn had been very assiduous in advertising his province in Germany and the Netherlands, taking especial pains to depict in delightful language the benefits to be derived by residing in his province. As Pastorius was sending glowing accounts of the German settlement to Europe, Rittinghuysen decided on Germantown as his future abode.

The exact date of his emigration is unknown. Jones, in his historical sketch of the Rittenhouse paper mill, suggested that Willem and his sons were here "a couple of years prior to 1690," when the mill was built. They were certainly at Germantown before April 4, 1689, when Lot Number 19, where now stands the famous little Mennonite Church on the northeast corner of Germantown Avenue and Herman Street, was awarded to Willem, and half-lots numbered 20 and 21 were granted to his son Claus.[5] On May 29, 1689, in New York, Claus Rittenhuysen was married to Willemyntje de Wees, daughter of Gerrit and Zythian de Wees of Leeuwarden, Netherlands.[6] Where he met the girl is not certainly known, but theirs could have been a shipboard romance. Claus accompanied his wife and her family to Germantown.

In Philadelphia was the only printer in the Middle Colonies—the justly celebrated William Bradford, who had

5 *An Explanation of the Original Location and General Plan or Draught of the Lands and Lots of Germantown and Creesam Townships, Copied from Matthias Zimmerman's Original of June 26th, A.D. 1746, and of the Several Districts and Divisions thereof, part extracted from original and former Draughts, and part done and taken from actual Mensuration. Drawn by Christian Lehman, July 28th, 1776. Now Carefully recopied Jan. 1st, 1824, by his Grandson, Joseph Lehman, for his father, Benjamin Lehman*, p. 9. (Manuscripts Department, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.)

6 *Collections of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society*, vol. I, *Marriages: Dutch Church, New York, 1639-1801* (1890), p. 67.

come from Leicestershire in 1685. His joy must have been great when he learned that a paper maker had finally settled in the Province, for all of his paper had to be imported from Europe.

The first paper making firm in the present United States was formed in 1690. Samuel Carpenter, a prominent and public-spirited citizen of Philadelphia, leased to Robert Turner, William Bradford, Thomas Tresse, and William Rittenhouse (to give him the usual form of his name) a tract of twenty acres on a branch of the Wissahickon Creek later known as Paper Mill Run (the Indian name was Monoshone Creek) for a term of 999 years. Turner, Bradford, Tresse, and Rittenhouse agreed to pay an annual rent of five shillings sterling on the 29th day of September each year during the said term. "The chief and most important member of the company," observed Jones, "was William Rittenhouse."[7]

The mill is usually mentioned as being "in Germantown", although at the present time its site appears to be included in the neighboring community of Roxborough. Senator Jones points out[8] that the term "the German-Town" included Roxborough as well as Germantown proper, "for at that date," he relates, "the territory comprising the present Roxborough, although divided into plantations, had received no particular name; and as the settlers of both places were Germans and Hollanders, the name of 'German-Town' was very appropriate."

Edward W. Hocker, the well-known Germantown historian, in a letter to the writer dated June 11, 1940, supplements Jones's information: "There once was a Germantown Township, the boundary being Wissahickon avenue. William Rittenhouse probably lived first in the settled part of Germantown. To find a suitable stream for his paper mill, he went to the west side of the community, to Paper

7 Jones, "Historical Sketch of the Rittenhouse Paper Mill," *Pa. Mag. Hist. & Biog.*, vol. XX (1896), p. 322.
8 *Ibid.*, p. 318.

Mill Run. His mill was always spoken of as being in Germantown, because that was the nearest community. Later Roxborough Township was formed, and the Rittenhouse property was in that township, immediately at the Germantown Township border. The community called Roxborough, within Roxborough Township, was much farther from the mill than was the community called Germantown, within Germantown Township. The Wissahickon Creek was and is the natural division here. The Rittenhouse property was on the north and east of the stream, in the territory that naturally attached itself to Germantown. The Roxborough community is on the other side."

Although Rittenhouse is generally mentioned as "the first American paper maker," that honor, strictly speaking, belongs to two Spaniards. In 1575 Hernán Sánchez de Muñon and Juan Cornejo received a twenty-year concession to manufacture paper in New Spain, their mill being built at the village of Culhuacan, just southeast of Mexico City.[9] It is doubtful, however, if this mill existed longer than the twenty-year limit, and it certainly had no lasting effect on the history of paper making. Rittenhouse was the first paper manufacturer in British North America and his distinction as the founder of the industry in the Western Hemisphere remains unimpaired.

On the 7th day of the 3rd month (May) 1691, sixty of the leading inhabitants of Germantown, including Francis Daniel Pastorius, Dirck Keyser, Dirck Isaacs Op de Graeff, Heivert Papen, Peter Schumacher, Hans Milan, Hans Peter Umstad, *Willm Rittinghuysen, Claes Rittinghuysen,* Wigard Levering, and Jan Lucken, were naturalized as subjects of King William III and Queen Mary II. The original of this impressive document, the "Copia Naturalisationis", is now in the possession of the Juniata College

9 Dard Hunter, *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft* (1947), p. 479.

Library, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. It begins: "William Penn, Proprietary of the Province of Pennsilvania, etc. By the King and Queen's authority, to all to whom these Presents shall come Sends Greeting etc." It proceeds to name sixty-two persons who, being "high and low Germans, Inhabitants and Owners of Land in German-Town and in the County of Philadelphia, being forreiners, and so not freemen, according to the acception of the Law of England, Have requested to be made freemen of the said Province, pursuant to the Powers granted by the Kings Letters patent, and Act of Union and Naturalization, etc. made to this Government, Now Know ye, that for the further Incouragement of the Industry and Sobriety of the said Inhabitants, And for the better and further Security of their Estates real and personal, to them and their heirs, They the said Inhabitants having Solemnly promised (upon record in the County Court of Philadelphia aforesaid) faith and Allegiance to William and Mary, King and Queen of England, etc. and fidelity and lawful Obedience to me, according to the King's Letters patents aforesaid, I doe declare and by these Presents Confirm them the said Inhabitants before named to be Freemen of this Government, And that they shall be accordingly held and reputed in as full and ample manner as any person or persons residing therein, And that they the said Freemen have liberty and freedom hereby to trade and traffic in this Colony or in any of the King's Dominions and Plantations, as other good Subjects do without any manner of Lett, Hinderance or Molestation whatsoever."[10]

10 "Naturalizations, Germantown, Pa., 3/7/1691-2," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, vol. XXVIII, no. 1, (March 1940), pp. 7, 8. The date in the title, "3/7/1691-2," is incorrect, thus implying that these Germans were naturalized on *March* 7, 1691/2. They were naturalized on the 7th day of the 3rd month, which in 1691 was *May*. The "Copia Naturalisationis" has also been published in Daniel Kolb Cassel, *A Genealogical History of the Kolb, Kulp or Culp Family and its Branches in America* (1895), pp. 14, 15; Ralph Beaver Strassburger, *The Strassburger Family and Allied Families of Pennsylvania* 1922), pp. 387, 388; and Gerhard Friedrich, "Pastorius Naturalization Paper," *The American German Review*, vol. VII (Oct. 1940), pp. 30-32.

In the short space of two years the Rittenhouse mill had achieved a well-earned fame, with the result that in 1692 Richard Frame, in a poetic mood, burst into rhythm and lustily sang its praises in *A Short Description of Pensilvania or a Relation of What things are Known, Enjoyed and Like to be Discovered in the said Province:*[11]

A *Paper Mill* near *German-Town* doth stand,
So that the Flax, which first springs from the Land,
First Flax, then Yarn, and then they must begin
To weave this same which they took pains to spin.
Also, when on our backs it is well worn,
Some of the same remains Ragged and Torn;
Then of the Rags our Paper it is made;
Which in process of time doth waste and fade;
So what comes from the Earth, appeareth plain,
The same is Time, returned to Earth again.

And in 1696 John Holme advised:[12]

Kind friend, when thy shift is rent,
Let it to th' paper mill be sent.

In the following year Gabriel Thomas noted in his description of Pennsylvania that "All sorts of very good *Paper* are made in the German-Town as also very fine *German Linen* such as no Person of Quality need be asham'd to wear."[13]

Meanwhile, William Bradford, the printer and associate of Rittenhouse in the paper making business, ran into serious difficulties. It seems that he preferred to do his own thinking—and even in Pennsylvania, founded on prin-

11 From the facsimile reproduction in the Rare Book Room, Library of Congress, of the original copy in the Library Company of Philadelphia. The verses about the paper mill are on pp. 7, 8. Frame's poem was printed and sold by William Bradford.

12 John Holme, *A True Relation of the Flourishing State of Pennsylvania* (1696), in *The Bulletin of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, vol. 1 (1848), p. 172.

13 Gabriel Thomas, *An Historical and Geographical Account of the Province and Country of Pensilvania; and of West-New-Jersey in America* (London; Printed for, and Sold by, A. Baldwin, at the Oxon Arms in Warwick-Lane, 1698), p. 42. (Copy in the Rare Book Division, Library of Congress.)

ciples of tolerance, this was a dangerous, if not a novel, idea. In 1689 he was brought before the Governor on a charge of printing the provincial Charter without authorization. He was put under a bond of £500. His right to print the Charter was defended by the Society of Friends, but it was a different story in 1692 when he entered into the Keithian controversy.

George Keith, who had accompanied George Fox and William Penn on their evangelistic tour of Holland and Germany, which had such unfortunate results at Mülheim, as we have seen, came to America in 1684. After a tour of duty as Surveyor-General of East New Jersey he went to Philadelphia where he became a schoolmaster. He defended Quakerism against the furious attacks of New England divines, but eventually he and his coreligionists had a falling out. He was accused of heresy, and replied to this charge by starting his own sect known as "Christian Quakers" or "Keithites." In those days Quakers were not the meek and mild individuals that we imagine them to have been. They were given to vigorous action and lurid speeches; Keith, for instance, was charged with reviling Deputy Governor Thomas Lloyd, whom he called "an impudent Man, telling him he was not fit to be Governour, and that his Name would stink, with many other slighting and abusive Expressions."[14]

William Bradford printed a tract on behalf of Keith, and thereby incurred the ire of the Society of Friends, which in 1687 had ordered him to "clear what may concern Friends or Truth before printing, to the Quarterly Meeting in Philadelphia, and if it require speed to the Monthly Meeting where it may belong." We are not informed whether

14 *The Tryals of Peter Boss, George Keith, Thomas Budd, and William Bradford, Quakers, for several Great Misdemeanors (as was pretended by their Adversaries) before A Court of Quakers: At the Sessions held at Philadelphia in Pensylvania, the Ninth, Tenth, and Twelfth Days of December, 1692. Giving also an Account of the Most Arbitrary Procedure of that Court.* (Printed first Beyond-Sea, and now Reprinted in London, for Richard Baldwin, Warwick-lane, 1693), p. 7.

"speed" was required in the Keithian controversy, but certainly Bradford saw no reason to "clear" his publication with the Quarterly Meeting.

The result was that the printer was arrested, and his tools, type, and other utensils were confiscated. He was held in confinement for a considerable length of time, and finally was brought to trial. Bradford stoutly defended the freedom of the press, which is one of our cardinal principles today. His trial was the forerunner of the Zenger trial in the following century, which definitely established this principle as one of our fundamental rights. Finally, on April 28, 1693, the Provincial Council advised the Governor to have his tools and press restored to him.[15]

Bradford had won his fight, but he decided that Pennsylvania was not the Utopia he had believed it to be. He had incurred the displeasure of the ruling party—the Quakers—and he knew that sooner or later he would again get into trouble with them. Soon after his acquittal, he removed to New York, where for the next half century he was Royal Printer to the Colony.

The famous printer did not sever his connection with the Rittenhouse paper mill; he continued to receive his supply from that establishment, it being sent to him probably overland and by river. But three years after his removal from Penn's province, he decided to lease his share of the mill to the Rittenhouses, as the following document shows:[16]

> Know all men by these presents, That it is Covenanted & agreed as followeth by and between Wm Rittenhouse and Clause Rittenhouse of German Town Paper-makers on ye one part, and William Bradford of ye Citty of New York, Printer on ye other part, Wit-

15 John William Wallace, *An Address delivered at the Celebration by the New York Historical Society, May 20, 1863, of the Two Hundredth Birth Day of Mr. William Bradford, who introduced the art of printing into the Middle Colonies of British America* (1863), pp. 57-59.

16 Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 323, 324.

nesseth, That y^e^ said W^m^ Bradford having one fourth part of y^e^ said paper-mill near German Town, he y^e^ said W^m^ Bradford doth demise and to farm letten all yt his fourth part of y^e^ s^d^ Paper-Mill and Land with all appurtenances thereunto belonging for and during the full Term of Ten years from y^e^ first day of September in y^e^ year of our Lord 1697, with all y^e^ profits arising thereupon, For and in consideration whereof, it is Covenanted and agreed by [and] between the said Parties, That they the sd. W^m^ and Clause Rittenhouse shall pay and deliver to sd William Bradford his Executors or assigns or their order in Philadelphia y^e^ full quantity of Seven Ream of printing paper, Two Ream of good writing paper and two Ream of blue paper, yearly and every year during y^e^ sd. Term of Ten years. It is further Covenanted by and between sd. parties, That y^e^ sd. W^m^ and Clause Rittenhouse, their Executors or Assigns shall keep up and maintain the sd. Mill in good Repair at their own proper Costs and Charges, during the sd. Term of Ten years as also leave y^e^ sd. Mill and Appurtenances in good Tenantable Repair. Also it is further Covenanted That during y^e^ sd. Ten years y^e^ sd. William and Clause Rittenhouse shall lett y^e^ said W^m^ Bradford his Executors or Assigns have y^e^ refusal of all y^e^ printing paper that they make and he shall take y^e^ same at Ten shillings pr. Ream, As also y^e^ sd. Bradford shall have y^e^ refusal of five Ream of writing paper and thirty Ream of brown paper yearly and every year during y^e^ sd. Term of Ten years, y^e^ writing paper to be at 20^s^ and y^e^ brown paper at 6^s^ pr. Ream, to be delivered likewise to y^e^ order of W^m^ Bradford or his Executors or Assigns at Philadelphia. And if they sell sd. paper to others at a less price than above specified, the s^d^ William Bradford shall have what he

takes abated to the same price. In and to y^e performance of these articles of agreement and every clause therein contained, they the said Clause and W^m Rittenhouse and W^m Bradford do bind and oblige themselves each to the other in the sum of Fifty pounds Currant Money of y^e Province of Pennsilvania. In witness whereof the sd. parties have to these presents their hands and seals interchangeably set this 24^th day of September in the year of our Lord 1697.

Sealed and Delivered in y^e
presence of us
JACOB COFING
his
JEREMIAH X OSBOURN
mark

1686636

WILL. BRADFORD
[Seal]

It is interesting to note that these Articles of Agreement, which Senator Jones saw and handled reverently in 1863, were written in Bradford's hand on paper manufactured at the Rittenhouse mill, as was proved by the water mark WR, the initials of the maker's name. From this document it is apparent that Bradford was to enjoy a monopoly of all the paper made in the little mill on the banks of the Wissahickon Creek, for a period of ten years (1697-1707).

Disaster struck the firm in 1700 when a spring freshet completely destroyed the mill, which was undoubtedly a wooden structure. This catastrophe occurred during William Penn's second visit to Pennsylvania, and at once the great Proprietor lent his active support to the Rittenhouses in their trouble. The story is best told by William Barton, David Rittenhouse's nephew and biographer:[17]

> . . . There is now before the writer of these memoirs a paper in the hand-writing of the celebrated William Penn, and subscribed with his name, certifying that 'William Rittinghousen and Claus' (Nicholas) 'his

17 Barton, *op. cit.*, pp. 83, 84.

son,' then 'part owners of the paper-mill near Germantown,' had recently sustained a very great loss by a violent and sudden flood, which carried away the said mill, with a considerable quantity of paper, materials and tools, with other things therein, whereby they were reduced to great distress; and, therefore, recommending to such persons as should be disposed to lend them aid, to give the sufferers 'relief and encouragement, in their needful and commendable employment,' as they were 'desirous to set up the paper-mill again.' . . . .

". . . In Mr. Penn's certificate he is called an old man, and is stated to have been 'decrepid.' "

This last statement is interesting, for William Penn and William Rittenhouse were *both* born in the year 1644, the former in England and the latter in Germany. The making of paper in those days was a long, hard, tedious process, and it may very well be that the strenuous life Rittenhouse was forced to lead gave him the appearance of being older than the Proprietor and somewhat decrepit. As a matter of fact, William Bond Wheelwright quotes Byron Weston's *History of Paper Making in Berkshire County* in an effort to get a general idea of Rittenhouse's appearance:[18] "The papermakers of the old times could be distinguished from other classes of workmen by their big, red hands, the result of dipping their hands continually into warm water and pulp, and by their stooping, round shoulders caused by constantly bending over the vat."

As Senator Jones commented,[19] Penn's recommendation that assistance in rebuilding the mill be offered the Rittenhouses, "is without date, and the original certificate has disappeared. As a friend of honest industry and the promoter of every trade which could advance the material

18 W. B. Wheelwright, "Pioneers of American Paper Making," *The Paper Maker*, no. 1 (1940), p. 20.

19 Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 326, 327.

prosperity of the Commonwealth, he was naturally desirous to see this establishment in particular rebuilt, and there were kind friends who nobly responded to his call. Having chosen another site a short distance below the first mill, a new structure was erected in the year 1702, much more substantial than the first."

The evidence indicates that William Bradford, who continued to hold a monopoly of the products of the Rittenhouse mill, did not contribute to its reconstruction. By degrees Claus Rittenhouse had been acquiring the shares of the other partners—Turner's in 1697 and Tresse's in 1701 or 1702,—and now he and his father wished to purchase Bradford's share. It seems that Bradford agreed to their proposal, but then changed his mind and in a letter to Samuel Carpenter made an alternative offer. In the absence of documents reciting the full history of the transaction we are in the dark as to the nature of his proposal, but the Rittenhouses appear to have rejected it. Following is the only extant document, a letter from Claus to Bradford, that relates to this phase of the mill's history:[20]

*Philadelphia the 12th 5th Mo 1703.*

*Lo. ffriend*

*Wm Bradford—*

I have yours directed to Samuel Carpenter dated the 22d Aprill last which my father & I have Read, & considered yr. severall proposalls, which being different from ye first lettr, wherein you condescended to doo as others did, and thereupon gave us Encouragement to proceed in Rebuilding the Paper Mill. Wee therefore hope & earnestly intreat yr. ffavr to take yr share of the materialls saved and the arrears of Rent due and thereupon discharge us as Thomas Tresse hath done and hath given us a full discharge and Release of all Right and Claim to the sd Paper Mill,

20 *Ibid.*, pp. 327, 328.

wee being to pay the arrears of Chiefe Rent, upon which we gave him our bond to pay him what wee owe him. Part of what wee owe thee is already paid in paper & the rest shall be pd. to yr. content. And as for furnishing you with paper from time to time, as wee reckon ourselves obliged in duty for yr. kindnesses, so wee intend to serve yr. occasions to our ability, but considering this Country may want paper and severall here have been so kind as to assist us in Rebuilding the paper mill, wee dare not engage ourselves by any Contract or bond to any particulars, least it may not be in our power to comply without disapointing or disobliging the rest of our ffriends; Soo yt wee desire you only to depend upon us for serving you with paper the best wee can— which wee shall do to the utmost, and yr. favorable answer to our Request; for you are partly sensible of our Condicion yt wee are not able to comply to those proposalls in yr. Lettr. to Sam. Carpenter. I also rec$^{d}$ yrs. of 13$^{th}$ June wherein you desire some paste board, such as I used to make for you, viz, the two thicker sorts which may be ready to be delivered to Nich$^{s}$ Pearse in about two weeks, viz 40 or 50 lb. Inclosed is an account of what wee have saved and used belonging to the former mill, being £15.2.4. Yr part is 3.15.7$^{d}$ to which adding the Rent due being About or near ¾ of year at £6. pr. year is 4.10. make the whole £8.5.7d.

I conclude with Kind Respects & subscribe In behalf of my ffather and myself—

*Yr. ffriend*

CLAUS RYTTINGHOUSEN.

The enclosure was entitled: "An Account of the materialls of the old Paper Mill which were used in the new Mill:"

21 Scantling is a timber of comparatively small cross section.

| | |
|---|---|
| The plates for the house 160 feet, 6 by 8 inches at 3d per foot | £2. 0.0. |
| 147 foot of Scantling[21] 3 x 4 inches at 1d pr. foot | 12.3. |
| 36 foot 5 x 7 inches at 2d pr. foot | 6. |
| 80 foot 3 x 4 inches at 1d pr. foot | 6.8. |
| 205 foot of boards at | 16.5. |
| 205 foot of Scantling 3 x 4 at 1d pr. foot | 17. |
| 1 Axle tree or Shaft for the Wheel | 1. 0.0. |
| Some water troughs | 10. |
| The Presse | 5. 0.0. |
| 252 lbs. of Iron at 6d pr. lb. | 6. 6. |
| | £17.14.4. |
| The charge of taking up the Presse & getting it home | 2. |
| & for taking up & bringing to the Mill, the other things | .12 |
| | 2.12. |
| | £15. 2.4. |

Finally, on June 30, 1704, Bradford disposed of his share of the mill, so that fourteen years after its establishment, the Rittenhouses were in complete control of America's first paper making firm.[22] Bradford's representatives in Philadelphia must have been Nicholas Pearse and Thomas Cressen. In 1893 there were still extant receipts which showed that on October 9, 1705, Nicholas Pearse had received from Claus Rittinghouse thirty reams of "large Printing Paper" for the use of William Bradford, and on April 11, 1706, Thomas Cressen had received from Claus eighteen reams of brown paper, three reams of blue paper, and thirty-four pounds of pasteboard for William Bradford. The following receipt is a cause for slight mystification: "Received the 21st day of March 1708-9, the sum of

22 Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

Six Shillings of Claus Rittinghaussen in full of all accounts and demands from y^e beginning of the world to y^e day of and y^e date hereof. Witness my hand y^e day above, WILL BRADFORD. *Attest*: Toby Lesh."[23] We are glad that Claus paid his debt in full, but did he have to do it "from y^e beginning of the world"? Another receipt, dated November 11, 1706, shows that Nicholas Rittenhous paid eight shillings four pence "for his Tax for the support of Government, was Rated att 40 pounds att 2½d per Pound" by order of the Collector, John Hinndy.[23]

About a year and a half after Bradford had sold his share of the paper mill, William Rittenhouse secured the land on which the paper mill was located on a lease for 975 years. The deed concerning this transaction was dated "the Ninth day of the Twelfth month called Ffebruary, In the ffourth year of the Reign of Queen Ann" (1705/6). The grantor was Samuel Carpenter, of Philadelphia, and the grantee was William Rittenhouse, of Germantown. This indenture recited:[24]

> Whereas in the year of our Lord, One thousand Six hundred and Ninety, It was agreed Between the said Samuel Carpenter of the one part, And Robert Turner, William Bradford, Thomas Tresse and the said William Rittenhouse in behalf of themselves and others that undertook to build a Paper Mill upon the Land hereafter mentioned of the other part, That the said Samuel Carpenter should Demise unto the said Robert Turner, William Bradford, Thomas Tresse, William Rittenhouse and the rest of the Company or Persons concerned as aforesaid, all that Tract of Land whereon the said Paper Mill was to be erected, Containing Twenty acres, To hold them to their Executors or Assigns for the Term of Nine hundred and ninety Years, Paying unto the said Samuel Carpenter

23 Cassel, *A Genea-Biographical History of the Rittenhouse Family*, p. 11.
24 Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 321, 322.

his Heirs or Assigns the Rent of ffive Shillings Sterling on the Twenty ninth day of September yearly during the sd. Term. And Whereas the said Paper Mill was afterwards built but no Lease actually signed or executed according to the said Agreement; And Whereas Ffrancis Rawle Administrator of the Estate of the said Robert Turner, As also the said William Bradford, Thomas Tresse and the rest of the Persons concerned in the said Paper Mill, Assigned their right and Interest therein to the said William Rittenhouse, Now this Indenture Witnesseth that the said Samuel Carpenter As well for the Consideration of the Rent and Covenants hereinafter mentioned and reserved As also for divers other good causes and considerations him moving, hath demised, Granted, Lett and to ffarm letten And by these presents Doth Demise, Grant, Lett and to ffarm lett unto the said William Rittenhouse All that Paper-Mill scituate in the said County of Philadelphia, And all that Tract of Land whereon the same stands, Beginning at a Spruce Tree near Wessehickon Creek, Then North East One hundred and Ten perches by Thomas Jaques Land to a Corner post; Then North West by German-Town Land Thirty five perches to a Corner post; Then South West by Thomas Master's Land Ninety four perches to a post by the said Wessehickon Creek; Then down the severall Courses of the same Creek to the place of beginning, Layd out for Twenty Acres being part of One hundred acres sold and Conveyed by William Harwood to the said Samuel Carpenter and His Heirs and Assigns forever by a Deed of ffeoffment duly executed under the Hand and Seal of the said William Harwood dated the Seventh day of the ffourth Month 1693 Acknowledged in Court at Philadelphia the Sixth day of December 1693.

The term of the lease was 975 years from September 29, 1705, and the rent reserved was five shillings sterling per annum.

Today, with the Fourdrinier and other complicated pieces of machinery, the paper manufacturing industry is able to turn out millions of tons of paper annually. Senator Jones estimated[25] that the yearly output of the Rittenhouse mill was from twelve to fifteen hundred reams of paper of all kinds, "but this is mere conjecture". "Small as was its capacity," he wrote, "it was all-important to the community at large, for the home supply of Pennsylvania was dependent upon it; and, as we have just seen, the great commercial metropolis of America [New York] was once supplied with the printing-paper from this small mill."

The mill was apparently built of logs, either near or directly over the Paper Mill Run, in order to have water to operate the trip-hammer used for pounding pulp, and to dampen the mass of rags for decomposition. It was either partly on the bank and partly hanging over the stream, or the entire factory was on the bank except for the water-wheel, which would, of course, have to stretch out over the water.

"The essentials for the finer paper were clean, white linen rags," states a modern biographer of Rittenhouse, "and an abundance of clear, flowing water, free from too much mineral matter. At this period the rags were thrown into a water-filled trough, and pounded by a stamping-machine run by a trip-hammer, being slowly beaten until they became a thin, fibrous pulp. They had previously been placed in a vat, in order to ferment and disintegrate, so that the trituration might make the mass more fluid. When the mass had been pounded to a proper consistency, it was taken to a large vat, where the 'vatman' stood with his mould, merely a rectangular frame with a bottom of fine wires, closely set, running the length of the frame, and

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 324, 325.

crossed by coarser wires, closely set, running the length of the frame, and crossed by coarser wires, widely set, running its width. The skill of the paper-maker made up for the extremely primitive tools which he used. For he had to take up the proper amount of pulp into the mould, give it a peculiar twist to the right and left, in order to have the pulp spread evenly and drain properly, and remove the frame from the mould; then he gave the mould to a second man, called a 'coucher,' who drained more of the water from the paper and then, with a deft movement, flipped the thin, saturated layer of pulp on a felt pad slightly larger than the sheet of paper it held. Another worker took each sheet and sandwiched it between two felt pads, until he had one hundred and forty-four sheets, or a 'quire of paper'. When he had six quires, or a 'post', he placed them under a screw press, something like a cider mill, in order to squeeze out the excess water. Then all the workers were summoned to help turn the press, by means of a long lever, on which they all tugged. Next the papers were taken out of the felt pad and pressed all on one pile, in order to squeeze out the water that remained. After this the 'layman' took four or five pieces of still moist paper together and placed them upon a length of hair rope, coated with beeswax, in a loft or some other place where the air was pure and free from dust. Here the paper remained until it was sufficiently dried, at which time it was dipped into a sizing, to make it impervious to ink. Several days were necessary to produce a specimen of dry, finished paper. If three men worked for the usual long hours, they might be able to make a maximum of about twenty posts, or approximately five-and-a-half reams of paper in a day. This process of making paper was in main most likely that in use at the Rittenhouse paper mill."[26]

26 George Allen, "The Rittenhouse Paper Mill and Its Founder", *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, vol XVI (April 1942), pp. 117, 118. A footnote on page 118 stated that this process of papermaking, described by Mr. Allen, is based on Lawrence Wroth, *The Colonial Printer* (2nd ed., 1938), pp. 123, 124, and Dard Hunter, *Papermaking Through Eighteen Centuries* (1930), pp. 118 ff.

The exact location of the mill, in relation to the house on Paper Mill Run built by the Rittenhouses in 1707, has not been definitely ascertained. Its probable location was discovered in 1933 by a noted Philadelphia authority on water marks, James F. Magee, Jr. About three hundred and thiry feet upstream, and on the other side of the creek from the house, he found a small rock, "the top of which had been bored at two places, making holes of about three inches depth. Since he found the rock at a point not far below the confluence of two smaller streams, where a good deal more water flows than farther up-stream, Mr. Magee came to the conclusion that this was the site of the first, as well as the second, mill, the second having been built at or very near the site of the first. The stone probably served to hold firm a post, and keep it from sinking."[27] George Allen, from whose 1942 article the above accounts are taken, reporting an interview he had with Mr. Magee two years previously, said: "Mr. Magee adds that the stone may belong to the second mill, as a result of the lesson the Rittenhouses learned from the feebleness of the first structure. It is of course possible that the stone was used for some entirely different construction, but as no other buildings are known to have been on this plot of ground, Mr. Magee's view seems quite tenable."[28]

The early paper makers used a variety of devices of marks to distinguish their products, such as animals, birds, fishes, heads, flowers, domestic and warlike implements, coats-of-arms, etc. The earliest such marks date from about the year 1282.[29] "The water-mark is produced by wires bent in the shape of the letters or device required," Jones explains, "and sewed to the surface of the mould, its effect being to make the paper thinner in those places."[30]

The first water mark adopted by the Rittenhouses was

27 Allen, *ibid.*, p. 116.
28 *Ibid.*, footnote on p. 116.
29 *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 13th ed. (1926), vol 20, p. 727 (article, "Paper").
30 Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

the single word *Company,* to designate the original partnership. Next, the principal founder of the firm put his initials, WR, on one half of the sheet of paper, and on the other half a clover leaf (from the seal of the Borough of Germantown) in a shield surmounted by a sort of crown, and below the word *Pensilvania.* Other devices adopted by William included a head wearing a fool's cap with bells dangling below the head and the initials WR; and a horn in a shield surmounted by a crown with the initials WR below. After his father's death, Claus used KR (his first name being *Klaas* in Dutch), and later KR with a clover leaf beside the initials, the whole enclosed in a border.[31]

In this chapter we have traced step by step the small beginning of one of our greatest American industries. The pioneers in the history of paper manufacture were William Bradford, who needed a locally produced commodity that would be cheaper for him to buy than paper imported from England or Europe, and William Rittenhouse and his son Claus, who provided the "know-how" in satisfying the wants of Bradford, and, after they had ended the printer's monopoly, of other consumers. Bradford, indeed, was not inclined to give Rittenhouse credit for his part in organizing the business. On November 18, 1690, he wrote to an as yet unidentified correspondent in London: "Samuel Carpenter and I are building a paper mill about a mile from thy mills at Skulkill, and hope we shall have paper within less than four months."[32] But all historians of the American paper manufacturing industry are agreed that the most important member of the partnership was Wil-

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 325, 326; reproductions of the Rittenhouse water marks in Allen's article, *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* April 1942, and Renker's article, *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch,* 1939.

32 Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker, LL.D., *The Settlement of Germantown, and the Beginning of German Immigration to North America* (in: *Proceedings and Addresses of the Pennsylvania German Society,* vol. IX, 1899), pp. 218, 219. Gov. Pennypacker gives as his source: Letters from Pennsylvania, London, 1691, p. 8. The present writer has been unable to identify the source.

liam Rittenhouse, whose son, Claus, later became so closely associated with him.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the team of Bradford and Rittenhouse was unbeatable, and inspired William Bond Wheelwright to compose *The Firm of Bill and Bill, A Ballad of American Papermaking*.[33] The last three of the thirteen verses pay a fitting tribute to "Bill" Bradford and "Bill" Rittenhouse:

All honor to their enterprise,
Whose bold determination
Put papermaking on our map
And on a *firm* foundation.

Our national tonnage was the least
When they set moulds a-shaking,
Today the States outstrip the world
In pulp and paper making!

Lest we forget who pioneered
America's first mill,
Fill up a stuff chest brimming full
And drink—to Bill and Bill!

33 Following his article, "Pioneers of American Paper Making", in *The Paper Maker*, no. 1, 1940.

# AMERICA'S FIRST MENNONITE MINISTER

WE turn now to an entirely different phase of William Rittenhouse's career—his ministry in the Mennonite Church.

Just when he joined the sect that took its name from Menno Simons is not known. The Rittinghausen family probably belonged to the Reformed or Calvinist faith at Mülheim. In 1660, when William was sixteen years old, the celebrated Theodor Untereyck became pastor of the Reformed Church at Mülheim, and held office until 1668, when he accepted a call to be Court Preacher to the Landgravine of Hessen-Kassel.[1] He later became one of the leaders of the liberal-minded sect know as Pietists. It may be that during his ten-year residence (1678-88) in Holland William Rittenhouse came under the influence of the Mennonites, who were strongly entrenched in that country.

The Mennonite faith had its origin in the great Anabaptist movement of the first quarter of the sixteenth century, and took its name from Menno Simons, a priest at Witmarsum (his birthplace) in the countship of East Friesland for several years until he formally broke with the Roman Catholic Church early in 1536. He was one of the Anabaptist leaders of the time.[2]

1 Rev. James I. Good, D.D. *History of the Reformed Church in Germany, 1620-1890* (1894), pp. 324, 325.

2 *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, vol. III (1957), pp. 577 ff (article, "Menno Simons," by Cornelius Krahn); Albert Henry Newman, D.D., LL.D., *A Manual of Church History* (Revised and enlarged edition, 23rd printing, 1953), vol. II, pp. 178-180; *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 13th edition (1926), vol. 18, pp. 132, 133 (article, "Menno Simons", by Rev. Alexander Gordon).

A brief recital of the fundamental beliefs of the Mennonites (and their Anabaptist antecedents) will give us some idea of the type of man that was William Rittenhouse. They are vigorously opposed to infant baptism as being unauthorized by the Scriptures; only believers may be baptized. There should be no connection between Church and State; the State's authority shall be obeyed in all lawful things, but it has no right to interfere in matters of conscience. They generally refuse to accept magistracy, since Christ Himself had declined to judge a case involving two brothers' inheritance. They refuse to take oaths, in accordance with Christ's prohibition of oaths. One should not bear arms, even in self-defense or in defense of the country, as such is regarded as being contrary to the Bible's teachings. Love and charity must be extended to every one, even to one's enemies. The Mennonites believe in plain dress and no adornments, such as jewelry.[3]

Germantown is the cradle of American Mennonitism, but the majority of the first settlers were Quakers. Some had been won to the Society of Friends from the followers of Menno, and they have been designated as Mennonite-Quakers.[4] On April 9, 1693, Rev. Rudolphus Varick, Dutch Reformed clergyman in New Netherland, reported to the Classis of Amsterdam on a journey he had made to Pennsylvania in June 1690; his reference to Germantown is of interest in connection with the religions prevailing there: "I then came to a Dutch village, near Philadelphia, where, among others, I heard Jacob Telner, a Dutch Quaker, who preached there. Subsequently I lodged at his

3 Newman, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 153-155, *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (1910), vol. XII, pp. 299, 300 (article, "Mennonites", by John Horsch); Jesse Leonard Rosenberger, *The Pennsylvania Germans* (1923), pp. 87, 88; *The Enc. Brit.*, 15th ed., vol. 18, p. 132 (article, "Mennonites", by Rev. Alexander Gordon), vol. 1, 903-905 (article, "Anabaptists", by Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare, M.A., D.Th.).

4 John C. Wenger, *History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference* (1937), p. 11. See also the comprehensive work by Dr. William I. Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, published by Swarthmore College in 1935.

house in Philadelphia. This village consists of forty four families, twenty eight of whom were Quakers; the other sixteen are of the Reformed Church. I addressed those who had been received as members by Mr. Oyer (?). The Lutherans, Mennonites and Papists, all of whom are much opposed to the Quakers meet lovingly every Sunday, when a Mennonite, Dirck Keyser from Amsterdam, reads a sermon from a book by Joost Harmensen."[5]

It is clear from this passage that the Mennonites at Germantown were in a minority and as of June 1690 had no organized congregation. Dirck Keyser was not an ordained minister, but for the spiritual benefit of his fellow-Mennonites he read sermons from a book.

It would be interesting to know the reasons that impelled the Mennonites at Germantown to select William Rittenhouse as their first regular minister, but unfortunately the records are silent on that score. About 1712 Jacob Gaedtschalck or Godschalk(s), who was chosen a minister of the church in 1702, wrote a brief history of the origin of the Germantown congregation. It is embodied in a letter dated March 1, 1773, from three Mennonite bishops in Pennsylvania to their brethren in Holland; extracts follow:[6]

> This is the information we have from a certain short account written by one of the first ministers of our community, named Jacob Godschalks, born in the land of Cleev, in a city called Gog.[7] "The beginning or origin," thus ran the words of the above said Jacob Godschalks, "of the community of Jesus Christ here at Germantown, who are called Mennonites (Doopsgezinde), took its rise in this wise, that some friends out of Holland, and other places in Germany, came here

5 *Ecclesiastical Records. State of New York*, vol. II (1901), p. 1053. Published also by Wenger, *op. cit.*, p. 46, with slight variations.

6 Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker, LL.D., *Hendrick Pannebecker, Surveyor of Land for the Penns* (1894), pp. 49-51; Wenger, *op. cit.*, p. 397.

7 Goch, in the duchy of Cleve.

together, and although they did not all agree, since at this time the most were still Quakers, nevertheless they found it good to have exercises together; but in doing it they were to be regarded as sheep who had no shepherd, and since they still had no preachers, they endeavored to instruct one another. In the year 1690 more friends from Crefeld and elsewhere came into the land, who were also of our Brethren, and added themselves to us and attended our exercises at the house of Isac Jacobs [Isaac Jacobs van Bebber]. These last-mentioned friends, with the first found it good, or judged it better for the building up of the community, to choose by a unanimity of votes a preacher and some deacons. Therefore was Willem Ruttinghausen, born in Mongouer land, chosen preacher, and Jan Neues, of Creveld, as deacon, and the first-named then entered upon the performance of his duties."

The original letter of March 1, 1773, was bought by Governor Pennypacker at a sale in Holland. He translated it from the Dutch and published it in his biography of his ancestor, Hendrick Pannebecker. He gave the date of Rittenhouse's ordination as *1690*. A German copy of the letter was published by Dr. Christian Neff in the *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender* (Kaiserslautern, Germany) in 1929.[8] In this version it is stated that Rittenhouse and Neues (Neuss, Nice) were chosen in *1698*. We believe, however, that if the German version is a copy and the Dutch is the original, Pennypacker was correct in reading 1690 as the year the first American Mennonite minister and deacon were chosen.

The Mennonites, unlike the Quakers, did not keep very full records; consequently, we have very little information concerning William Rittenhouse's ministry of eighteen years (if we accept 1690 as the year of his ordination).

8 Wenger, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

In 1694 a blind and penniless man, Pieter Cornelisz Plockhoy, and his wife appeared in Germantown. For thirty years they had been wandering aimlessly on the shores of North America. Theirs was a strange story. Plockhoy, a Mennonite, conceived the plan of founding a community based on the brotherhood of man. Its members were to live in peace and to share equitably the results of their mutual labors. They were to hear the Gospel without dogma read in a common meeting place for all sects. The profits from farming, fish catching, mining, and other occupations were to be divided according to the number of individuals, sick or well, over twenty years of age. The widows and their children were to be provided for out of a common fund; and so on.

Plockhoy was successful in getting a group of Dutch colonists together and in 1662 they came to New Netherland, settling at Hoorn Kill on the South (Delaware) River, where Lewes, Delaware, now stands. Unfortunately, the leader did not have an opportunity to carry out his undertaking. Two years later war broke out between Holland and England, English troops appeared in the Delaware Valley, and the colony was dispersed. What happened to these Dutch settlers is not known, but after three decades their aged leader and his wife suddenly appeared on the streets of the community on the Wissahickon. The good people of Germantown, true to the Mennonite concept that charity should be extended to all, promptly went into action. Preacher William Rittenhouse and Jan Doeden were appointed a committee to collect money for the old couple and to have a house built where they could pass their declining years.[9] Over thirty years earlier, Plockhoy had proudly proclaimed that "no lordship or servile slavery shall burden our company". It was this spirit which had animated the Germantown Friends,

9 Pennypacker, *The Settlement of Germantown* (1899), pp. 249-263; Wenger, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Gerrit Hendricks, Dirck op den Graeff, Francis Daniel Pastorius, and Abraham op den Graeff to issue their famous "Protest Against Slavery" on the 18th day of the 2nd month (April) 1688.[10] Pieter Cornelisz Plockhoy had at last come to rest among kindred spirits.

The Mennonite community continued to grow very slowly. On October 8, 1702 two new preachers were chosen, Jacob Gaedschalck (Godschalk) and Hans Nice (Jan Neues, Neuss) who had been the first deacon of the church since 1690.[11]

Meanwhile, Preacher Rittenhouse had been giving thought to another project. The Mennonite Confession of Faith had been adopted at Dordrecht, in Holland, on April 21, 1632; it is interesting to note that one of the signers of this important document was Hermann op den Graeff, of Crefeld, an ancestor of the Germantown family.[12] In Rittenhouse's time the eighteen articles of the Confession were available only in the Dutch and German languages. Rittenhouse proposed that an English translation be printed, and accordingly he wrote to New York to ascertain the cost, which, however, was so prohibitive that the plan was dropped. The story is told in a few words in a letter written after Rittenhouse's death: "The congregation here is still rather weak to have anything printed. It would cost a great sum to have printing done here, and both here and in New York printing is in English. Hence we, or rather our aged friend and preacher, Willem Rittinghuyssen, wrote to New York to have the articles of faith printed in English because there are people here who call themselves Mennists who would like to have our articles translated into English. But they asked so much that our congregation could not raise it." Wenger, the his-

10 Learned, *Francis Daniel Pastorius* (1908), pp. 260-263; Wenger, *op. cit.*, pp. 412-414.

11 Pennypacker, *Hendrick Pannebecker*, p. 51; Wenger, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

12 See the text of the Dordrecht Confession of Faith in Wenger pp. 435-463.

13 Wenger, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

torian of the Franconia Mennonite Conference, suggests that "These 'Mennists' were probably Dutch Mennonites who had come to New Amsterdam (New York) as early as 1640 and later, and who were by the time of this letter English-speaking."[14] Although the letter does not so state, Rittenhouse undoubtedly had gotten in touch with his old friend and associate, William Bradford, who was then the Royal Printer for the Province of New York.

During the early period of the Germantown Mennonite Church, no one had been baptized nor had any communion been held, since these services could be performed only by a bishop. It was probably late in 1701 that Claes Berends, a member of the Germantown Church, wrote to the ministers at Altona, his former congregation near Hamburg, reporting the lack of a bishop and requesting that some one be sent to Germany to ordain a bishop, in order that baptismal and communion services could be held.

In March 1702, the Altona leaders, Pieter Verhelle, Jacob van Campen, Gerrit Roosen, and Jan de Lanoi replied. They 'referred to Berends' letter containing his "afflicted considerations" about "the services of holy baptism and holy communion". "Concerning this proposal that some one be despatched to Pennsylvania," they wrote, "the journey is too distant and too laborious." They saw "no other way out than that the necessity of the services" be placed squarely before the members of the Mennonite community at Germantown; the latter were admonished "to pray earnestly a long time, that the Lord be pleased to look at the teachers already at hand with gracious eyes and overlook the weakness in you". They stated that before them was the example of the first Church, and Christ's commandment to His Apostles to go forth and baptize all; as evidence, they cited Matthew 28 (they had in mind verse 19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 90, footnote 3.

Holy Ghost") and Mark 16 (verses 15 and 16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"). "Wherefore Paul says to himself," the Altona clergymen continued, "he be not sent to baptize, wherewith he is willing to say: As the twelve chosen Apostles, yet he has baptized a few when the occasion of necessity presented itself. So also Deacon Philip baptized the chamberlain from Ethiopia, also many at Samaria, when they believed in his preaching, Acts of the Apostles 9" (verses 36, 37, 38 relate how Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch). With such Scriptural authority, Verhelle, van Campen, Roosen, and de Lanoi declared that it was their view and opinion that their Germantonwn brethren should go ahead with the administration of baptism and communion, "as we do not doubt it would be done in the fear of the Lord", and "so would be pleasing to the Lord."[15]

By this letter the Germantown church had authority to choose its own bishop. The logical candidate was William Rittenhouse, the first minister. The evidence, scant though it be, points to the fact he was troubled in his soul and declined to assume the functions of a bishop. The Mennonites lay considerable emphasis on the ordination of bishops by the "laying on of hands" (in German, *Handauflegung*), and we may assume that with typical Mennonite modesty he hesitated to arrogate these functions to himself without European bishops performing the desired act of *Handauflegung*. It is also clear that he regarded the comparison with the Apostle Paul and Philip the deacon as a compliment of which he deemed himself to be unworthy.

15 The original letter, in the Dutch language, has disappeared. But the Mennonite Archives at Hamburg-Altona fortunately has an extract of the letter, made at the time it was written. It was translated into German by Pastor Heinrich van der Smissen early in this century and printed by Dr. Harold S. Bender in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1931, pp. 284, 285 and by Wenger, *op. cit.*, pp. 405, 406.

Several years passed, and late in 1706, the situation having by now become critical, the Germantown congregation sent an urgent appeal to the Mennonite authorities at Amsterdam. The letter was referred for action, however, to the ministers at Hamburg-Altona, no doubt because they had been involved in the problem four years earlier. On April 16, 1707, the Hamburg-Altona clergymen wrote a strong letter to their Germantown brethren, whose principal preacher they authorized to go ahead with the baptism of those persons who desired it. This time Rittenhouse did not hesitate; he accepted the instruction and signified his intention of performing this most necessary function of a bishop. But his death took place on February 18, 1708 (1707/8?) before he could carry out his plan.

The exact date of his demise is contained in the 1773 letter, already quoted, in which Jacob Gaedtschalck's brief history of the Germantown congregation is given. "The 18th of February, 1708," Gaedtschalck wrote, "the first chosen preacher, Willem Ruttinghausen, died, to the great regret of the community."[16] More details are contained in a letter dated September 3, 1708, to the authorities at Amsterdam, who had countersigned the letter of April 1707 from Hamburg-Altona;[17]

> Your very welcome writing of April 16, 1707, signed by the ministers of Hamburg and Altona and by you and with your full approval, has come to hand. We have well understood your good instruction, and the letter gave us sufficient answer and was with joy received by our aged preacher, Willem Rittinghuyssen. He was accordingly fully resolved to serve with baptism upon their desire those who were requesting it and had requested it. However, the Lord laid him and his wife on a sickbed and in a few days he was taken

16 Pennypacker, *Hendrick Pannebecker*, p. 51; Wenger, *op. cit.*, p. 88 (with slight variations from Pennypacker's version).
17 Wenger, *op. cit.*, pp. 89, 90.

> from us, which was a painful loss to us. And about two or three days before his departure he gave a brief admonition, and taking his leave of the brethren fell asleep in the Lord, he being . . . 64 and [she] 66 years old. His going was a grievous experience to us. Let me say, as it stands in the Revelation of John 14:13, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;" and as a certain poet says, "Sleep then my friend in God who lives until that joyous day--till when my God who can do all things again will give life."

The ministers who signed this letter were Jacob Gaedtschalck, Harmen Karsdorp, and Martin Kolb. Karsdorp and Kolb had been ordained ministers on April 20, 1708.[18]

For many years it had been believed that William Rittenhouse was the first bishop, as well as the first minister, of the American Mennonite Church. Daniel Kolb Cassel so stated in his *History of the Mennonites,* published in 1888. His assertion was not contradicted until January 1933, when Dr. Harold S. Bender, of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, published an acticle in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* entitled: "Was William Rittenhouse the first Mennonite Bishop in America?" He reviewed all of the known documents on the subject (which have been quoted in this chapter) and reached the conclusion that Rittenhouse never became a bishop, but remained a preacher until his death. It is an indisputable fact, however, that Rittenhouse was the head of the church, even if he did not have the title of bishop. He was also finally resolved to proceed with the rite of baptism, one of the functions reserved for a Mennonite bishop, but passed away before he could accomplish it.

*The Mennonite Quarterly Review,* vol. XVIII, no. 1, January 1944, pp. 49-58, contained two articles on this controversial subject, namely: "William Rittenhouse, First

18 *Ibid.,* pp. 272, 275.

Mennonite Bishop in America", by Dr. Calvin I. Kephart, and "Was the Authorization of William Rittenhouse to Perform Baptisms Equivalent to Ordination as Bishop in the Mennonite Church?" by Dr. Harold S. Bender. Both writers presented excellent arguments.

Briefly stated, Dr. Kephart held that the April 16, 1707 letter from the officials in Europe gave the necessary authorization to the Germantown Church to proceed with the appointment of William Rittenhouse as bishop. "It was plenary in its effect," he wrote, "It did not attempt to create an intermediate or hybrid or a temporary office for Rittenhouse. It was definite and was deemed by all concerned to be wholly sufficient for the purpose intended. No doubt can be entertained on this score. *It gave joy to the aged preacher, who was then fully resolved to proceed with the duties that only a bishop of the church regularly had the right to perform;* in fact, the congregation had made certain that there should be no short-cuts in this respect, as indicated in the acknowledgement of September 3, 1708." He adduced various legal arguments and precedents to prove his point. He held that the 1707 letter was sufficient authority so that the physical "laying on of hands" was not necessary in this case. He cited the case of a priest named Stephen who was elected Bishop of Rome in 752 but died before his formal consecration. He quoted an eminent historian of the Catholic Church, Father Horace K. Mann, who wrote that "we hold that election on the one hand and consent on the other are enough to make a pope. From the time at least of St. Benedict II, the popes-elect have exercised full jurisdiction in the church and hence were acting as heads of the church as popes." Church historians have been arguing for generations on the question of recognizing this obscure priest as Pope Stephen II, some omitting him from the list, but Dr. Kephart felt that Mann's arguments in favor of acknowl-

edging him as a pope were analogous to the arguments in favor of Rittenhouse as the first Mennonite bishop.

In his reply, Dr. Bender observed that "Dr. Kephart's argument is handicapped by his failure to give weight to historical Mennonite tradition and practice. Since he is not versed in this field, he does not realize how much he depends on the interpretation of legal and ecclesiastical precedents and terms with which he is familiar and which has validity in its own proper sphere but does not have a decisive bearing on Mennonite life and practice." He agreed that the 1707 letter from Europe may have "constituted the necessary confirmation of the congregation's choice of Rittenhouse as their first bishop" in the sense used by Dr. Kephart, "but this confirmation would have been only an approval. It would not have meant the conferring of an office. The right to perform functions of a bishop can be granted by letter, or by word of mouth, and has often been so granted in past and present Mennonite history, but the right to perform the function of an office does not constitute the possession of the office." "In the final analysis," he wrote, "the practice of the civil courts or of the civil state proves nothing as to the practice of the church, particularly of the Mennonite Church. Neither does the practice of the Roman Catholic Church prove anything. The decisive weight of evidence must be the tradition, practice, and constitution of the Mennonite church in regard to the office of bishop and the performance of episcopal duties. . . . From a Mennonite historian's general knowledge of these facts, however, which Dr. Kephart will no doubt accept, it must be said that there is no evidence that any Mennonite ordination to the office of bishop has ever been made at long range by letter, and further that it would be contrary to all precedent for a Mennonite minister to claim to have received such an office by letter. On the other hand, there is abundant precedent for the fact that a bishop or a congregation can

authorize a minister to perform the functions of a bishop in the absence of a bishop, without thereby in any sense assuming or receiving the office of a bishop. Many a bishop has authorized a minister to perform baptisms or marriages or to conduct the rites of the Lord's Supper and other ecclesiastical ordinances. It would be altogether in line with Mennonite tradition, which is the only factor that can possibly be decisive in the Rittenhouse case, for European Mennonite elders to authorize the young Mennonite congregation at Germantown to proceed with the ecclesiastical business of the church by appointing its minister to perform episcopal functions until such time as a bishop could be duly ordained." In conclusion, he stated: ". . . the extract of the letter quoted by Dr. Kephart, calls Rittenhouse 'our aged preacher,' not 'elder.' The well-known Mennonite title or name for bishop in 1708 was 'elder.' If Dr. Kephart's theory is correct, the 1708 letter should have called Rittenhouse 'elder'."

In this discussion, we are, of course, handicapped by the lack of care with which the Mennonite Church preserved its early records. In the present chapter we have presented in detail both sides of the argument, in order to enable the reader to reach his own conclusion as to whether or not William Rittenhouse was the first American Mennonite bishop. Dr. Kephart has stated unequivocally: "Clearly, Rittenhouse was more than a *de facto* bishop; he was a *de jure* bishop, having been duly confirmed and having publicly accepted the office. . . ." Dr. Bender has countered: "We are willing to agree with Dr. Kephart that both Rittenhouse and Gottschalk[19] were *de facto* bishops, but we insist that this fact does not make them *de jure* bishops in Mennonite ecclesiastical polity."

And there we let the matter rest.

19 Dr. Kephart had also raised the question of whether Jacob Gottschalk (Gaedtschalck) was a bishop, since the evidence of his ordination was not any more conclusive than that for Rittenhouse's promotion to that office.

# WILLIAM RITTENHOUSE'S FAMILY AND DESCENDANTS

WILLIAM Rittenhouse had three known children, all born presumably at or near Mülheim an der Ruhr, in the loidship of Broich and duchy of Berg: Nicholas (generally known as Claus, Claes, Klaus, Klaas), born June 15, 1666[1]; Gerhard (Garret, Gerard, Gerrit), born about 1674 (conjecture only)[2]; and Elizabeth, who became the wife of Heivert Papen, of Germantown. Dr. Hull has suggested that a Jan Willemse Huyseen who was residing at Germantown in 1693 may have been another son.[3] But we discount this. Neither of the known sons of William were given the Dutch patronymic of *Willemse* in the records, and it seems most unlikely that the *Ritting* would have been dropped from the family name. Dr. Learned names a *Paul Ruttinghuson* among the patrons of the Germantown school from 1706 to 1708[4], but the present writer has found nothing concerning this man.

We are equally in the dark regarding the identity of William Rittenhouse's wife. Presumably she was a girl from Mülheim and vicinity. We would suggest her first name was *Elisabeth,* for two reasons: (1) Their daughter was named Elizabeth (the German name has the *s,* not the z); and it would be logical for the daughter to bear the mother's name; and (2) on the 26th of the 2nd month

1 Jones, "Historical Sketch of the Rittenhouse Paper Mill", *Pa. Mag. Hist. & Biog.*, Oct. 1896, p. 332. We have not found documentary evidence for this date, but we have implicit faith in Jones as a careful researcher and accept it until proved wrong.

2 This approximate date is from Cassel's history of the Rittenhouse family.

3 William I. Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania* (1935), p. 417.

4 Learned, *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius*, p. 185.

(April) 1692 *Willem Rittinghuysen* and *Elisabeth Rüttinghausen* were among the signers of the marriage certificate of Heinrich Frey, "of Altheim in the province of Alsace in high Germany, now Inhabitant of Germantown in the County of Philadelphia" and Anna Catharina Levering, "of Mülheim in the County of Bruck [Broich], likewise in high Germany".[5] Willem signed his own name, but Elisabeth signed hers by mark. We believe that this Elisabeth was William's wife and not his daughter, for the following reasons: (1) Her name appeared as Rüttinghausen, not as Rittinghuysen, the way he signed—the daughter probably would have followed her father's spelling; (2) Elisabeth could not write and had to make a mark near her name— the sons Claus and Gerhard could write, and presumably Elizabeth the daughter could write sufficiently to sign her own name, although at that time women's education was considerably neglected; (3) the sons Claus and Gerhard did not sign the marriage certificate, and it is logical to assume that Elizabeth the mother would sign, rather than Elizabeth the daughter.

We know from the letter of September 3, 1708, that William Rittenhouse's wife died at about the same time that he passed away; she was evidently two years older than he. Was this wife his only spouse, and the mother of his children, or was she a second wife, whose name began with a "C" and perhaps was Catharina, a common German female name at the time? In 1707 Rittenhouse erected a stone residence near Paper Mill Run; the busy Lincoln Drive, in Fairmount Park, now runs beside the building. Over one window appears the monogram:

W

C R

1707.

Writers on Rittenhouse have long considered that the "C"

5 Original certificate on file in the Manuscripts Department of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

in this monogram stood for Claus, the elder son who was so closely identified with his father's business interests. This could very well be; but it was most unusual for a son's initial to appear in such a monogram. Monograms were frequently put on houses built at that period, and in all cases known to this writer *the wife's* initial followed that of the husband, never a son's. It is quite possible that in this case an exception was made; but it is equally possible that the "C" on the monogram is our sole reminder of William's presumed second wife.

Until he built his house not far from his paper mill, Rittenhouse and his family had lived in the settled part of Germantown, apparently on the ground now occupied by the Mennonite Church on Germantown Avenue above Herman Street. In 1702 he donated land for the Mennonite meeting house and later he gave the land for the present church lot and burial ground; on it in 1708, after his death, was erected the little log church that stood until 1770, when it was replaced by the present stone structure.

Although he followed the precepts of the Mennonites by not seeking public office, Rittenhouse was not insensible to local needs, as is shown by his signature on a petition of November 1701:[6]

To the Governor & Council

The humble Petition of the Inhabitants of German-Towne, Abington, Cheltenham, North-Wales and the Northern Liberties in behalfe of themselves & others, showeth,

That yo:r Petitioners for want of a Settled Rhoad to Philadelphia have been forced to goe round—new fences being from time to time set up in the Rhoad by Daniell Pegg & Thomas Tisom & the Land cleared & Improved by them whereby they have driven us to

6 Original petition in the Logan Papers, vol. 3, p. 31, Manuscripts Department, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

uneven Rhoads & very dangerous for people Especially Carts to pass.

Therefore wee humbly request that you will be pleased to lay out a Rhoad to goe from the Corner of Thomas Tisom's fence Straight over the Creek to the Corner of John Sharp's field & afterwards to devide into two branches one to German Towne and the other to Frankford, the German Town Rhoad being the Rhoad that most Carts comes to Towne all the Lime is carried that way, & the meale from three miles with much mault and a great deal of wood, Timber & other things, & the greatest part of the Countrie lies that way: And wee suppose it to be as near or nearer to Frankford & fast Land all along.

Wee hope you will be pleased to grant your Petitioners this reasonable request being for the generall good of the Town & Countey & we shall as in duty bound pray./

The petition was signed by fifty-eight persons, including Cornelis Claesen, Philip Christian Zimmermann, Johannes Umstat, Hans Peter Umstat, *Heivert Papen* (Rittenhouse's son-in-law; no. 7 on the list of signers), Francis Daniel Pastorius, Paul Wulf, Thomas Potts, James Delaplaine, Elias Burling, Tunnes Cunrads, Cunrad Cunrads, Renier Tysen, *Willm Rittinghuysen* (no. 56), *Claus Rittinghuysen* (no. 57), Abraham Tünes, etc.

The career of Claus Rittenhouse as a paper maker we have traced in conjunction with that of his father. George Allen, in his article on the Rittenhouse paper mill in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* in 1942 quite properly noted that Claus deserves as much credit as his father in building and operating the first American paper mill. Indeed, toward the end of William's life, Nicholas (Claus) seems to have shouldered most of the burdens of the firm. This may have been caused partly by his father's advancing

years, but also perhaps because William was giving increasing attention to the administration and the ministerial needs of the Mennonite community at Germantown.

Claus followed in his father's footsteps in another respect; he, too, became a minister of the Mennonite Church, apparently after 1712, since he was not named in Jacob Gaedtschalck's history of the congregation written at about that time. He was a delegate to the first Mennonite Conference held in America about the year 1725. Sixteen clergymen were present on that occasion, five from Skippack, three from Germantown, five from Conestoga, one from Great Swamp, and two from Manatany. They adopted the Dordrecht Confession of faith as the articles of confession for the American Church.[7] This document was printed in 1727 by Andrew Bradford, Philadelphia printer and son of the redoubtable William Bradford, New York's Royal Printer. The title-page reads:[8]

> The CHRISTIAN / CONFESSION / Of the Faith of the harmless / *Christians,* in the *Netherlands,* known by / the name of / MENNONITES. / AMSTERDAM. / Printed, and reprinted and sold by / *Andrew Bradford,* in *Philadelphia,* / in the year 1727.

Bound with the Confession and separately paged is the following:

> An / APPENDIX / to the / Confession of Faith / Of the Christians, called / MENNONITES, / Giving / a Short and full Account of them; because / of the Immagination of the Newness of / our Religion, the Weapon and Revenge- / less Christendom, and its being / Published / Formerly in the *Low-Dutch,* and translated / out of the same into *High-Dutch,* and out

7 Wenger, *Hist. of the Mennonites of Franconia Conference*, pp. 93, 316-318.
8 From an original copy in the Rare Book Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

/ of that into the *English* Language. 1725. / *Philadelphia;* Printed by *Andrew Bradford,* in the Year, / 1727.

On the reverse side of the title-page of the Appendix is this note: "To the Christian READER; We lovingly desire thee, not to look so much on the meanness of the wording of this little Book; because we are of Dutch Extraction, and therefore willingly own, that we are not exquisite in the English Language; but to look on the Grounds and Truths therein: And also kindly desire thee to Read the same without Partiality; and consider the Exhortation of the Apostle Paul, I Thes. 5.21. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

The Appendix concludes with this passage: "We the hereunder written Servants of the Word of God, and Elders in the Congregation of the People called *Mennonists,* in the Province of *Pennsilvania,* do acknowledge, and herewith make known, That we do own the afore-going *Confession, Appendix,* and *Menno's* Excusation, to be according to our Opinion; and also, have took the same to be wholly ours. In Testimony whereof, and that we believe the same to be good, we have here unto Subscribed our names."

The signers and their congregations were: *Skippack,* Jacob Gaedtschalck, Henry Kolb, Martin Kolb, Claes Jansen, Michael Ziegler; *Germantown,* John Gorgas, John Conerads, CLAES RITTINGHAUSEN; *Conestoga,* Hans Burgholzer, Christian Heer, Benedict Hitchi, Martin Bear, Johann Bowman; *Great Swamp,* Velte Clemer; *Manatany,* Daniel Langenecker, Jacob Beghtly.

An interesting question is raised by the final paragraph of the Appendix, in which the subscribers referred to themselves as "Servants of the Word of God, and *Elders.* . . . ." As we have seen, in the eighteenth century an elder in the Mennonite Church was a bishop. Were all sixteen of the above men elders? If this is true, then we have

evidence that Claus Rittenhouse had attained the status of a bishop.[9]

As we have seen, Claus Rittenhouse and his father were naturalized on the 7th day of the 3rd month (May) 1691. Eighteen years later he and others found it necessary to be re-naturalized, in order to safeguard their rights as British subjects. "An Act for the Better Enabling of Divers Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania [to Hold] and Enjoy Lands Tene[ments and Plan]tations in the same Province" was passed by the General Assembly on September 29, 1709, and was confirmed by Her Majesty Queen Anne in Council, February 29, 1713/14. The Act states that

> whereas divers of the protestant or reformed religion, who were inhabitants of high and low Germany, about five-and-twenty years ago[10] (out of a desire to come under the power and protection of the Crown of England, and partake of the advantages proposed for the encouragement of the adventurers to settle this new colony) embraced the invitations they held from the proprietary to transport themselves and estates here; and since they came did contribute the utmost of their power to enlarge this part of the English empire, and always behaved themselves as dutiful and peaceful subjects, and several of them have made and subscribed the declarations and test by law appointed instead of the oaths of supremacy; and the rest are ready and willing to do it when they are required or admitted so to do.
>
> Now forasmuch as the value of lands in this province being generally but the effect of the people's labor, their plantations are deemed, by our laws but as chattels to pay debts, and strangers have been ren-

9 Wenger (*op. cit.*, p. 93) raises the same question. "Evidently there was a conference of at least sixteen ministers (were they all bishops?) in 1725."

10 This is an error; they were naturalized in 1691, 18 (not 25) years earlier.

dered capable to hold what they purchased as fully and freely as if they had been natural-born subjects of this province; but since the repeal of the late laws, (made after the example of other governments) for the encouragement of the people and settling of this colony, some doubts and questions have arisen, whether the said Germans are capable to hold what they purchased as aforesaid: for removing of which doubts,

[Section I.] Be it enacted by Charles Gookin, Esquire by the Queen's royal approbation Lieutenant-Governor under William Penn, Esquire, Proprietor and Governor-in-Chief of the Province of Pennsylvania, by and with the advice and consent of the freemen of the said Province in General Assembly met, by the authority of the same, That Francis Daniel Pastorius, . . . . *Claus Rittenhuysen*, . . . . [and 79 other inhabitants of Philadelphia County, and one resident of Bucks County], in the said province of Pennsylvania; and every of them who shall within six months after the first day of September, one thousand seven hundred and nine, at some court of quarter sessions for the peace for the said county of Philadelphia, between the hours of nine and twelve in the forenoon, make and subscribe the declarations and professions of faith, allowed to those that cannot swear, instead of the oaths of supremacy and allegiance; or shall otherwise qualify themselves as the court shall require and the law directs in such cases, the taking of which qualifications, and the making and subscribing of the said declarations and professions, shall be entered on record in the same court; for the doing whereof one shilling shall be paid the clerk; and no more; all and every such persons shall be enabled, and are and every one of them is hereby enabled and judged able and capable to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever, as well to demand, ask, have, hold and

enjoy any lands, tenements, plantations, rents and hereditaments in this province, to which they or any of them may or might in anywise be entitled, as if they were free and natural-born people of the province; as also that they and every of them shall and may be enabled to maintain, prosecute, avow, justify and defend all and all manner of actions, suits, pleas, plaints and other demands whatsoever, in the said province, as freely and fully, lawfully and securely as if they and every of them had been natural-born subjects and people of the same, or as [any other person] or persons born within this province may lawfully do; any law or usage [to the] contrary notwithstanding.[11]

On the same day (September 29, 1709) Lieutenant-Governor Gookin informed his Council that he had received this Bill from the General Assembly and that "he was pleased to give his assent to the said bill".[12]

We might add, in passing, that life at Germantown was not entirely without excitement. Recently, this writer noticed the following brief story, under the date-line of September 28, in *The American Weekly Mercury* for Thursday, September 21-Thursday, September 28, 1721:[13] "Several Bears were seen Yesterday near this Place [Philadelphia], and one killed at German-Town, and another near Darby."

On May 24, 1734, Claus Rittenhouse, describing himself as of Roxborough Township, made his will; it was proved on June 4, 1734. Among other bequests he left to his son William twenty acres of land in Roxborough containing

11 *The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801,* vol. II (1896), pp. 297-300. The Law Library of the Library of Congress informed the writer that volume I of *The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (covering the period 1682-1700) was never published. We had hoped to find therein legislation affecting the small paper making industry in William Rittenhouse's early years as a paper manufacturer.

12 *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania,* vol. II (1838), p. 514.

13 Republished in facsimile by The Colonial Society of Pennsylvania.

the paper mill buildings and the appurtenances belonging thereunto.[14]

As we have seen (page 27) Claus Rittenhouse married Willemyntje de Wees in the Dutch Reformed Church at New York on May 29, 1689. She was born at Leeuwarden, in the Netherlands, on March 13, 1673,[15] and hence was sixteen years old at the time she became Claus's wife. She survived her husband only about three years. Her will (in the Dutch language) was made on March 6, 1737, and was written on paper bearing the Rittenhouse water mark. She signed by mark, her name being recorded as Willemyna Ruttynhuysen.[16] In 1710 her brother, William de Wees, who had undoubtedly received his training as a paper maker at the Rittenhouse mill, built the second mill in the colonies. But on December 15, 1713, with his wife Anna Christina, he sold his paper mill to Abraham Tunis, of Germantown Township, William Streeper. *Claus Rittinghuysen,* and John Gorgas, all of Roxborough Township, for the sum of £145. His property was described as being in that part of Germantown called Crefeld and bounded by the lands of William Streeper, Thomas Tresse, and Heivert Papen, and the Manor of Springfield. William and Anna Christina de Wees sold to them "the Paper Mill and all and every singular the Improvements, . . . Iron Potts and every other thing or things whatsoever belonging to the Paper Making Trade."[17] Thus, Claus Rittenhouse continued to operate the first paper mill in America, but he also bought an interest in the second mill in the colonies!

Claus and Willemyntje (de Wees) Rittenhouse had seven children, William, Henry, Matthias, Zytian (*not*

14 Cassel, *A Genea-Biographical History of the Rittenhouse Family,* 1893; Mrs. Philip E. LaMunyan, *The Dewees Family. Genealogical Data, Biographical Facts, and Historical Information* (1905), pp. 235-238.
15 LaMunyan, *op. cit.,* p. 14.
16 *Ibid.,* pp. 238, 239.
17 *Ibid.,* pp. 26, 27.

Psyche, as given by some genealogists), Mary, Catharine, and Susannah. The first-named daughter, Zytian, married John Gorgas, who was a minister of the Mennonite Church at Germantown and was associated with his father-in-law (Rittenhouse) in the work of the Mennonite Conference of 1725. From them were descended in direct line Brigadier-General Josiah Gorgas (1818-85), Chief of Ordnance, Confederate States Army, during the Civil War, and later President of the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee; and his son, Major-General William Crawford Gorgas, M.D., Hon. K.C.M.G. (1854-1920), one of the renowned conquerors of yellow fever.

The paper mill property continued in the line of Claus's eldest son, William, who carried on the business for many years. He was succeeded by his son, Jacob Rittenhouse, who died in 1811, when the property was inherited by his nephews, Enoch and Samuel. Enoch survived Samuel, and left a will (dated December 26, 1854, proved January 9, 1855) which showed that this branch of the family had risen to a position of some affluence for the times.[18] Describing himself as being of Roxborough Township, now the 21st Ward of the City of Philadelphia, Enoch left the following legacies: (1) Jonathan Rittenhouse (son of his cousin Daniel), land in Roxborough Township; (2) Peter Rittenhouse (son of his cousin Peter), four parcels of land; (3) Isaac Rittenhouse (son of his cousin Peter), tract of land of 63 acres and 144 perches; (4) brother, Jacob Rittenhouse, a small lot near the Wissahickon turnpike road, also rents from his merchant flour mill; (5) if Jacob leaves no lawful issue, the land with the merchant flour mill is to go to Nicholas Rittenhouse (son of his cousin, Nicholas, Sr.); (6) children of cousin William Rittenhouse, deceased, of Briar Creek Township, $2,000; (7) children of Susan Roberts, widow of Thomas Roberts, $2,000; (8) Samuel, George, Mary, and Sarah, children of cousin Peter Ritten-

18 Will Book 33, pp. 61 ff. Office of the Register of Wills, Philadelphia, Pa.

house, $2,000, to be equally divided between them, but as George has lately died, his share is to go to his children; (9) children of cousin Henry C. Rittenhouse, deceased, $2,000, to be equally divided between them; (10) Samuel Keyser, son of Jacob Keyser, deceased, $1,000; (11) children of Susan Nutz, deceased, late widow of William Nutz, $1,000, to be equally divided between them; (12) Martin B. Rittenhouse (son of cousin, Nicholas, Sr.), $1,000; (13) Northern Home for Friendless Children, $1,000; (14) Nicholas Rittenhouse, Sr. and his brothers and sisters (children of Martin Rittenhouse), $2,000, to be equally divided between them; (15) children of Michael Rittenhouse (son of uncle John), $1,000; (16) children of Cornelius Rittenhouse (son of uncle John), $1,000; (17) sons of William Rittenhouse, deceased, late of Cresheim, $1,000; (18) Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, $1,000; (19) Pennsylvania Institution for the Blind, $1,000; (20) children of Daniel Rittenhouse, deceased, $2,000. The executors were Enoch's brother, Jacob Rittenhouse, Nicholas Rittenhouse, Jr., and Peter Rittenhouse (son of his cousin Peter). In a codicil dated January 2, 1855, Enoch stated that in his will he had left $2,000 to the children of his cousin Daniel Rittenhouse, but did not name them. He now named them: Maria Umstead, Abraham R. Rittenhouse, and Rebecca Rittenhouse. He also explained that although he named Jacob Rittenhouse as his brother, he was not legally so except by adoption. "No loss or difficulty is to arise to him on account of the term not being the legal one," he said. In addition to considerable landed property, Enoch Rittenhouse made cash bequests totalling $21,000—which was not a bad sum of money to be possessed of in the year 1855.

Peter Rittenhouse, son of his cousin Peter, had inherited four parcels of land from Enoch; one of these was the historic paper mill property that had been acquired in 1690, 165 years earlier, by his ancestor, Willem Ritting-

huysen. This property, which includes the stone house near Lincoln Drive, remained in the Rittenhouse family until 1880, when it was acquired by the Fairmount Park Commission.[19]

We revert now to Claus Rittenhouse, the elder son of William. His son Matthias (1702-79) married (1727) Elizabeth Williams, of Welsh descent, and by her had nine children, of whom David Rittenhouse was the most illustrious member of this distinguished family. He was born on April 8, 1732, in the stone house built only a quarter of a century earlier by his great-grandfather, William Rittenhouse. He became a self-taught mathematician, astronomer, and surveyor; in association with others, he laid the boundary of Pennsylvania, settled the boundary separating New York from New Jersey, established the line between New York and Massachusetts, and fixed the circle with the 12-mile radius about New Castle that now constitutes the border between Pennsylvania and Delaware. His observation of the transit of Venus in 1769 enabled him to fix the distance between the earth and the sun with remarkable accuracy. His most extraordinary mechanical achievement was the construction of an orrery, a planetarium which, by manipulating the hands on the dials, shows the movement of the celestial bodies over a period of ten thousand years—5000 years before 1770, and 5000 subsequent to 1770. Thomas Jefferson once wrote of him: "We have supposed Mr. Rittenhouse second to no astronomer living; that in genius he must be the first, because he is self-taught. As an artist he has exhibited as great a proof of mechanical genius as the world has ever produced. He has not indeed made a world; but he has by imitation approached nearer its Maker than any man who has lived from the creation to this day." He was one of the patriot leaders during the Revolutionary War, holding the offices of Engineer to the

19 Sidney M. Earle, *Fairmount Park. The Parkway—The Wissahickon, and Some of its History up to 1950*, pp. 225, 226. (Typescript, The Free Library of Philadelphia.)

Committee of Safety, Vice-President of the Council of Safety, and President of the Board of War for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He succeeded Benjamin Franklin as a member of the State Legislature of Pennsylvania, and served as a member of the first Constitutional Convention of the State. He was State Treasurer for thirteen years (1776-89). He was the first Professor of Astronomy at the University of Pennsylvania, and in 1780 became the first Vice-Provost of the University. Over a decade later Rittenhouse was elected the second President of the American Philosophical Society, as successor to the lately deceased Franklin. He was the first Director of the first United States Mint from 1792 until his resignation for reasons of health in 1795; to him was delegated the responsibility of organizing this most necessary branch of the fiscal department of our infant Federal Government. Many honors came his way over the years—the M.A. degree from the College of Philadelphia, Princeton, and William and Mary (the Virginia college hailed him as "Chief of Philosophers"), LL.D from Princeton, Fellow of the American Society of Arts and Letters of Boston, member of the Society of Arts and Sciences of Virginia, and—highest of all—Fellow of the Royal Society of London. Dr. Rittenhouse was twice married; by his first wife he had two daughters whose descendants thus share the blood of the greatest of the Rittenhouses. He died in Philadelphia, June 26, 1796.[20]

Benjamin Rittenhouse, the younger brother of David, served during the Revolution as a captain and as Superintendent of the Gun Lock Factory. Thus, in only two generations, these men had strayed from the Mennonite paths followed so rigidly by their grandfather and great-grandfather; they exerted every effort to defend their country,

20 This synopsis his career is based on Milton Rubincam, "David Rittenhouse, LL.D., F.R.S.: A Study from Contemporary Sources", *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery Society, Pennsylvania,* Oct. 1939, pp. 15-30.

as did many other members of the Rittenhouse family. After the war he served as Associate Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and represented that county in the General Assembly of the State. By his first wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Brigadier-General John Bull, he had five children, of whom the eldest son, David Rittenhouse, Captain of the Northumberland Troop in the Whiskey Rebellion, was ancestor of the prominent Rittenhouse family of Washington and Georgetown, D. C., which, by its military record, seemed determined to stray even further from the Mennonite precepts of its first American ancestors. Benjamin Franklin Rittenhouse, of this branch, saw active service throughout the Civil War, continued in the Service, and retired with the rank of Major. His sons were Major Benjamin Franklin Rittenhouse, Jr., U.S.A., and Lieutenant-Colonel Basil Norris Rittenhouse, U.S.A.; the latter's son is Admiral Basil Norris Rittenhouse, U.S. Navy. The first Major Benjamin Franklin Rittenhouse's sister, Henrietta Waring Rittenhouse, was the wife of Thomas Wilson, who was brevetted Brigadier-General of Volunteers, and Major, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel, and Brigadier-General, United States Army, *all on one day*—March 13, 1865, "for faithful and meritorious service in the war." It was a busy day for General Wilson!

Captain David Rittenhouse, of the Whiskey Rebellion (mentioned above), had a younger brother, Benjamin Franklin Rittenhouse (the first of that name in this branch), who was appointed Midshipman in the Navy on January 2, 1804, was attached to the U.S. Frigate *Constellation*, sailed to the Mediterranean for service in the war with Tripoli, and died at sea, September 2, 1804, after only nine months' service.

Mary Rittenhouse, one of the daughters of Captain the Honorable Benjamin Rittenhouse, brother of David the astronomer, married Colonel Michael Nourse, who saw

service in the War of 1812. The eighth of their twelve children, Anna Josepha, married (1837) Charles Augustus Hassler, M.D., and had, among others, a daughter, Mary Caroline, who on August 4, 1863, became the wife of Simon Newcomb, one of the most eminent American astronomers. Like his wife's great-great-uncle, David Rittenhouse, Dr. Newcomb received many honors. The Imperial Russian Government conferred on him the unique distinction of having his portrait placed in the Imperial Observatory at Pulkowa as one of the world's greatest astronomers. The German Emperor, Wilhelm II, awarded him the coveted decoration, *Pour le Mérite,* and France, in addition to making him an Officer of the Legion of Honor, appointed him an associate of the Institute of France, the first time such a distinction had come to an American since Benjamin Franklin, whose name was borne with pride by so many Rittenhouses.

One of the daughters of Simon Newcomb and Mary Caroline Hassler was Anita Rosalie (Mrs. W. J. McGee), who received the M.D. degree from Columbian (now George Washington) University in 1892. Six years later, during the war with Spain, she was Acting Assistant Surgeon, U.S.A. (the only woman to hold that office) and Superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps, of which she was the organizer. Congress approved her work by making the Corps a permanent part of the Army. During the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 she took nine former American army nurses to Japan for six months' gratuitous service; this was by special arrangement between the United States and Imperial Japanese Governments. She was awarded the Imperial Order of the Sacred Crown, a special Japanese Red Cross decoration, by Emperor Mutsuhito. Dr. McGee, as related in the early part of the present history, conducted numerous researches on the European antecedents of the Rittenhouse family.

Esther Rittenhouse, the elder sister of David the astron-

omer and of the Honorable Benjamin Rittenhouse, married (1753) Reverend Thomas Barton, a noted Episcopalian clergyman and missionary for the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. They founded an outstanding family. Their sons included William Barton (1754-1817), co-designer (with Charles Thomson) of the Seal of the United States, and biographer of his uncle, David Rittenhouse;[21] Matthias Barton, member of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania and a State Senator; and Dr. Benjamin Smith Barton (1766-1816), who received his medical training at Edinburgh, London and Göttingen, later was Professor of Natural History and Botany and of the Theory and Practice of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and whose published writings on rattlesnakes, the origin of the North American tribes, and botany were regarded as important contributions in those fields. Among other noteworthy descendants of Rev. Thomas Barton and Esther Rittenhouse were Dr. William Paul Crillon Barton, who taught botany at the University of Pennsylvania and materia medica at Jefferson Medical College, became the first Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, in 1842, and subsequently served as President of the Navy's Board of Medical Examiners; Dr. John Rhea Barton, who in 1826 performed "a very remarkable and pioneer operation" at the Pennsylvania Hospital on a case of anchylosis of the hip-joint;[22] Thomas Pennant Barton (1803-69), Secretary of Legation at Paris (1833-36), and an eminent bibliophile and authority on Elizabethan literature, whose impressive library is

21 Milton Rubincam, "Memoir of the Life of William Barton, A.M. (1754-1817)", *Pennsylvania History*, vol. XII, no. 3, July 1945, pp. 179-193.

22 *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. II, p. 22. Dr. John Rhea Barton's daughter, Alice C., married Edward Shippen Willing, of the famous Philadelphia family, and had a daughter, Ava Lowle Willing, who married (1) Colonel John Jacob Astor IV (who went down in the *Titanic* disaster of 1912), and (2) Thomas Lister, 4th Lord Ribblesdale (died 1925). By Colonel Astor Lady Ribblesdale was the mother of Vincent Astor, the present head of the American branch of that family, and of Muriel Astor, whose first husband was Prince Serge Obolensky, of an ancient Russian house.

now one of the prized possessions of the Boston Public Library; Honorable Richard Walker Barton, member of the Virginia Legislature (1823, 1824, 1832, 1835, 1839) and of the U.S. House of Representatives (1841-42); and Honorable Robert Thomas Barton (1842-1917), member of the Virginia House of Delegates, Mayor of Winchester, and author of several legal works.[23]

We return now to the immediate family of William Rittenhouse, the paper maker and Mennonite clergyman. His second son, Gerhard Rittenhouse, does not seem to have cared much for the family business. At any rate, if he worked in the paper mill he soon left it and removed to Cresheim Division then a part of Germantown Township, Philadelphia County, where he became a grist miller, and where he was located by 1700. In a copy of a map drawn in that year by Matthias Zimmermann, Gerhard Rittenhousen is shown as owning 50 acres of land between Matthias Milan and Dirck Sell. The property bordered on Roxborough Township.[24] Apparently, he could not stay out of trouble, for the Germantown court records reveal that on the 7th day of the 3rd month 1695, Gerhard Ruttinghuysen was summoned to the Court for his failure to keep his fences in repair. He was fined six shillings for this offense.[25] On the 9th of 3rd month (May) 1702, Henry Sellen, Gerhard Ruttinghousen, Jan Krey, Thomas Potts

23 Milton Rubincam, "Barton Pedigree in the College of Arms, London", *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, vol. XXX, no. 1, March 1942, p. 1; and sketches of the Bartons in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. II, and Alexander Harris, *A Biographical History of Lancaster County* (1872).

24 *An Explanation of the Original Location and General Plan or Draught of the Lands and Lots of Germantown and Creesum Townships*, p. 47. (MS. Dept., Hist. Soc. of Pa. For full title, see page 27, note 5.

25 *The Records of the Courts of Record held in the Corporation of Germantown from the first day of the eighth month Anno 1691, and thence forward from time to time. Thus transcribed by order of General Court held at the said Germantown the 26th day of the tenth month in the Year 1690*, p. 14. (MS. Dept., Hist. Soc. of Pa.). This document contains, on page 7, a record relating to William Rittenhouse which we inadvertently omitted in the text: On the 4th day of the 2nd month (April) 1693, "Peter Keurlis delivered in open Court unto William Ruttinghuysen a deed of enfeoffment (*Erbpacht*) Containing 50 Acres of Land in Germantown."

and Claus Jansen were ordered to view a way from old Plymouth Road to Henry Tubbs' plantation. On September 15, 1702, they reported "that the said way is most conveniently to be between the lands of Abraham Tunes & Johannes Jawert Whereupon the Court confirms the said way."[26] On January 10, 1703 (1703/4) he purchased 50 acres of land in Cresheim from Matthias van Bebber,[27] and on May 16, 1715, 175 acres in Cresheim from Hans Graf and his wife Susanna, of Strassburg, Chester County, Pennsylvania.[28] Gerhard died between February 7, 1742/3, the date of his will, and February 19, 1742/3, the date of its probate.[29]

The name of Gerhard Rittenhouse's wife is wholly unknown. Cassel, in his genealogy of the family, assumed she was a "Miss Revacomb," but this is erroneous. "Revacomb" is a variation of the writer's name (Rubincam, Rubicam), and when Gerhard was married (which must have been about 1693) the Rubincam family was still in Germany. Cassel reached this odd conclusion because he misunderstood Gerhard's reference in his will to his "trusty kinsmen, Charles and Justus Revacomb"; the relationship did not come through his wife, but by virtue of the fact that these two men had married Gerhard's granddaughters.

Gerhard had only two sons, William and Peter. The elder, William, (1695?-1767), settled in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, not far from Rosemont. He signed his will, on August 27, 1761, as William Rittinghausen. His descendants, by his wife, Catharine Howell, included Honorable John P. Rittenhouse (1820-1901), member of the General Assembly of New Jersey and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Hunterdon County; Commander Hawley Olmstead Rittenhouse, U.S.N. (1851-1927), who aided

26 *Ibid.*, p. 29.
27 *Grund- und Lagerbuch.* Photostat of deed in the writer's collections.
28 Deed Book D-4, pp. 54, 55, Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Philadelphia, Pa.
29 Cassel, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-78.

in the relief of the inhabitants of the island of Chios during the earthquake of 1881, and was aboard the U.S.S. *Trenton* when it was wrecked by a hurricane in the harbor of Apia, Samoa, in 1889; Jessie Belle Rittenhouse, the noted poetess and anthologist, who died in 1948;[30] and Calvin I. Kephart, LL.M., D.C.L., Ph.D., Colonel, Quartermaster Corps Reserve, U.S.A. (Retired), President of the National Genealogical Society from 1928-1930 and 1938-1940, and of the Pennsylvania Historical Junto in 1946-47, whose researches on the Rittenhouse family have been mentioned in the course of this history. (The present writer, his fifth cousin through the Rittenhouses, followed in his footsteps by serving as President of the National Genealogical Society, 1945-48, 1953-54, and of the Pennsylvania Historical Junto, 1947-54.)

Probably descended from William and Catharine (Howell) Rittenhouse was Albert Paul Rittenhouse, member of the State Legislature of Missouri (1874-75) and Colorado (1890), and Judge of the Eighth Judicial District of Colorado. Of him a biographical reference work commented:[31] "Mr. Rittenhouse is a man of strong and marked individuality; somewhat impulsive and abrupt in his manners, original in his ideas and the expression of them." No truer words were ever spoken; certainly in his typescript, *Pedigree and History of the Rittenhouse Family for more than a Thousand Years in Europe and America* (1924; in the Library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania) he displayed originality of ideas, especially on pages 72-74 where he described a tour of Europe which William Rittenhouse *never* took with Georgius Rittershausen who was *not* his grandfather! Judge A. P. Rittenhouse's nephew, George Brown Rittenhouse (1878-1925), was President of the Supreme Court Commission of Oklahoma, and a successful attorney.

30 See *Who Was Who in America*, vol. II, 1943-50, p. 451.

31 *Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity, Colorado* (1898), p. 852.

Peter Rittenhouse, the younger son of Gerhard, and grandson of William Rittenhouse, the Founder, was born perhaps in 1696, and died between September 29, 1748, the date of his will, and October 15, 1748, when it was proved. He inherited his father's homestead plantation and grist mill in Cresheim, Germantown Township. He married Anne ————, by whom he had six children; Mary; Barbara, married (1) Charles William Rubincam (1707-48), and (2) James Stern; Susannah, married February 2, 1741/2, as his second wife, Justus William Rubincam (1705-68);[32] Margaret, married Conrad Weidner; Gerhard, married Mary Bartleson; and Jacob, married Susannah Bartleson.[33] Barbara and her first husband, Charles W. Rubincam, were the ancestors of Honorable Chapman Revercomb, United States Senator from West Virginia from 1943 to 1949 and 1957 to 1959; Raymond Rubincam, the distinguished advertising executive (see *Who's Who in America,* any recent edition); and the present writer. Susannah and her husband, Justus W. Rubincam, were the grandparents of Major-General Henry Scheetz, Commander, Second Division, Pennsylvania Militia, War of 1812, and afterwards a member of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania and the State Constitutional Convention of 1837; and great-grandparents of Honorable Horatio Gates Jones (1822-93), State Senator of Pennsylvania, President of the Welsh Society of Pennsylvania, Vice-President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of Great Britain, whose "Historical Sketch of the Rittenhouse Paper Mill" provided some of the basic documents for the present study.

32 Charles William Rubincam and Justus William Rubincam, the husbands, respectively, of Barbara and Susannah Rittenhouse, were the sons of Johann Philipp Rübenkam (1670-1725), pastor of Wanfried, Hessen-Rheinfels, Germany, by his wife, Margaretha Catharina (1684-1727), daughter of Matthias Sartorius, pastor of Wichmannshausen, Hessen-Rheinfels, by his wife, Anna Juliana von Boyneburg genannt Hohenstein. Margaretha Catharina (Sartorius) Rübenkam brought her family to America in 1725 or 1726.

33 Milton Rubincam, "Peter Rittenhouse, of Cresheim", *National Genealogical Society Quarterly,* vol. XXXI, no. 2, June 1943, pp. 42, 43.

The Rittenhouses seem to have a faculty for getting around. We have already noticed that Albert Paul Rittenhouse sat in the state legislature of two states (Missouri and Colorado). Similarly, Charles C. Rittenhouse managed to have himself elected mayor of towns in two different States—Hastings, Nebraska, from 1890 to 1892, and Tropico, Los Angeles County, California, from 1911 to 1912. Elmer Ellsworth Rittenhouse as a young man was a telegraph operator in Mexico, where he contracted yellow fever. At the end of the last century he participated in the building of the first railroad in Korea and the creation of the first Korean telephone system, which followed the new railroad from Chemulpo to Seoul. His real contributions came a few years later when he wrote the so-called "Rittenhouse insurance laws" which corrected improper practices of certain insurance companies in Colorado; they form the model for insurance legislation in other parts of the United States. A branch of the Rittenhouse family formed part of the great Mennonite migration to Canada early in the nineteenth century; their descendants live in the Province of Ontario today, although some members of this branch have come back to the United States.

Elizabeth Rittenhouse, the only daughter of William, the pioneer American paper maker, married a prominent Germantowner, Heivert Papen, before October 8, 1695, when she was confined to bed because of the imminent birth of a child, according to a court record to be quoted presently.

Heivert Papen came from Mülheim an der Ruhr, the old home of the Rittenhouses, before the 23rd day of the 1st month (March) 1685, when he acquired 50 acres of land from "Thomas van Wylich and Jhon le Brun, both partners in the Franckfurt Company", one of the groups which purchased land at Germantown and vicinity; this was lot no. 10. He pledged his services for this parcel of land—"to work thereupon one day every week during the

four years of his service, and after they are faithfully finished to pay for the same the usual rent of this country."[34] Four years later William Penn granted to Francis Daniel Pastorius and eight others, including Heivert Papen, a charter for the "German Towne" (12th of 6th month [August] 1689). The Charter, which was signed and sealed by the Proprietor, named the following as the borough's first officers: *Bailiff,* Francis Daniel Pastorius; *Burgesses,* Jacob Telner, Dirck Isaacs op den Graeff, Tünes Kunders; *Committeemen,* Abraham Isaacs op den Graeff, Jacob Isaacs, Johannes Cassel, HEIVERT PAPEN, Herman Bon, Dirck van Kolk.[35]

At an election held the 1st day of the 10th month (December) 1691, Pastorius was again chosen as Bailiff, and "Huffert Papen" was continued as one of the Committeemen.[36] Papen received from Pastorius, as attorney for the Frankfurt Company, on the 9th day of the 12th month (February) 1691 (1691/2), a deed of enfeoffment for 50 acres of land.[37] Papen was Recorder of Germantown in 1694.[38] The first court trial was held at Germantown on the 5th of the 12th month 1694 (1694/5), when Johannes Pettinger was tried for assault on Johannes Koster "and him did pull, push, and evily handle against the King and Queen's peace." The defendant was found guilty and fined two shillings. As Recorder, Papen was present on this occasion.[39] The court records for October 8, 1695, contain an item of human interest: ". . . Auch soll Frantz Daniel Pastorius in heutiger Court of Record an Heifert Papens platz (:als welches Frau in Kindbett u. kranck darnieder lag:) ds Recorder Amt bedienen" (Francis Daniel Pastori-

34 Learned, *op. cit.,* p. 135; Dr. Naaman H. Keyser, C. Henry Kain, John Palmer Garber, Horace F. McCann, *History of Old Germantown* (1907), pp. 332-334.

35 Learned, *op. cit.,* pp. 159, 160.

36 *Ibid.,* p. 161.

37 *The Records of the Courts of Record held in the Corporation of Germantown.* (Hist. Soc. of Pa.)

38 *Ibid.,* p. 12.

39 Keyser and others, *op. cit.,* pp. 48, 49.

us shall also serve in the office of Recorder at the present Court of Record in Heivert Papen's place [whose wife lay sick in childbed]).[40] It is evident that as the time approached for the confinement of his wife, the former Elizabeth Rittenhouse, the public business took second place in Heivert's thoughts. With his brother-in-law, Gerhard Ruttinghusen, Heifert Papen was one of the patrons of the first school in Germantown, which opened its doors in 1702.[41]

Meanwhile, Papen continued to increase his land holdings. On the 9th day of the 12th month (February) 1691, Francis Daniel Pastorius, in his capacity of attorney for the Frankfurt Company, delivered to Papen a deed for fifty acres.[42] In 1693 he purchased from Jacob Schumacher town lot number 8 and a side lot adjoining, and in 1705 he conveyed both lots to Samuel Richardson, Richard Townsend, Thomas Lotts, and Samuel Cost, trustees for the Quaker Meeting.[43] His house, which he built in 1698, has been described as "one of the best examples of our early Colonial Dutch architecture and stood on the corner of what is now known as Johnson Street, nearly opposite an old well on the Chew property which was filled up when Johnson Street was cut through. A noted architect once said that the masonry of Germantown was the best in the United States, a statement which was confirmed when the old house was torn down in 1883; so solid was the masonry that it had to be blown down with dynamite."[44]

Papen died between January 20, 1707/8 (the date of his will) and February 19, 1707/8 (the date of its probate). He was one of the most prominent citizens of old Germantown, and served his community well in several capacities. It is said by a number of historians that he declined to

40 Learned, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
41 *Ibid.*, p. 182.
42 *The Records of the Courts of Record*, etc.
43 G. E. Brownback, "Heivert Papen and the Papen House of Germantown," *The Penn Germania*, vol. XIII, no. 1, Jan. 1912, p. 78.
44 *Ibid.*, pp. 78, 79.

serve as Burgess in 1701 for reasons of conscience; a court record shows that on December 1, 1701, he, together with Paul Wulf, Peter Schumacher, and William Strepers, was elected Burgess.[45] The writer does not recall seeing in the official record a statement that he had declined the honor. It would seem strange that since his conscience did not prevent him from serving as Committeeman and Recorder of the infant borough, he would suddenly become conscience-stricken when a higher office would be tendered to him.

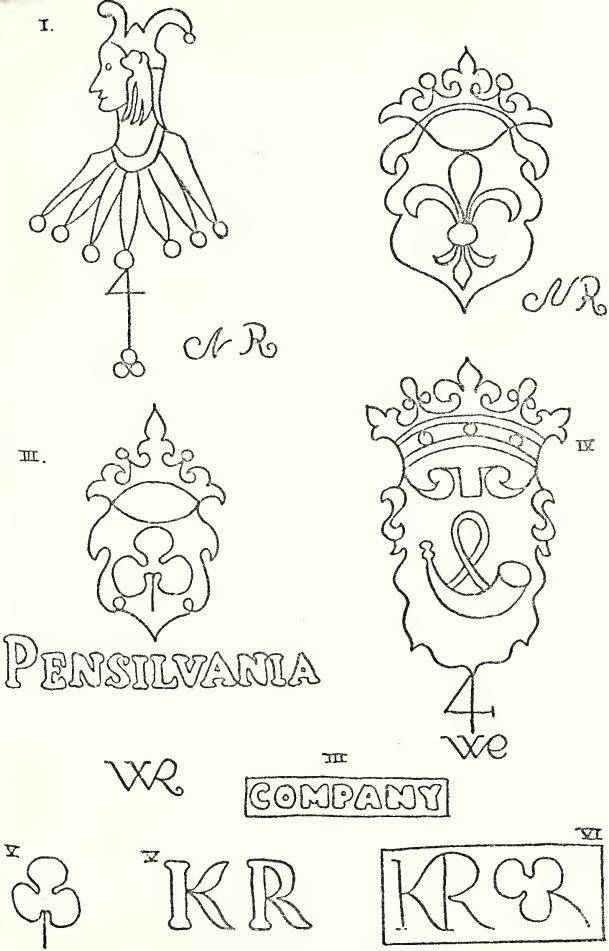
Elizabeth ((Rittenhouse) Papen died in 1720.[46] By Heivert Papen she had four daughters: Styntje (Christian), living in 1728; Maria (better known as Mary), married Gerhard Brumbach and was living in Vincent Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, March 5, 1728; Geertruyd (Gertrude), married Benjamin Howell on July 18, 1721, and died before 1728; Margaret, married Jacob Scheimer and was living in 1730; and Elizabeth, died before 1728.[47]

We have gone into more detail concerning the descendants of William Rittenhouse than could normally be expected in a biography of our first American paper maker. A full-scale investigation of the history of this unusual family should be launched. The existing genealogies are inadequate and most of them are confined only to certain branches of the family. None of them demonstrate the contributions made by the Rittenhouses as a family to American political, cultural, and literary development. The present writer and Dr. Kephart planned such a history some twenty years ago, but the pressures of other activities prevented them from carrying this project to completion.

45 *The General Court of the Corporation of Germantown oder Raths Buch der Germantownschen Gemeinde*, 1691-1707, p. 12. (MS. Dept. Hist. Soc. of Pa.)

46 Keyser and others, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

47 Cassel, *op. cit.*, pp. 79, 195; William T. Blair, *The Michael Shoemaker Book (Schumacher)* (1924), p. 10. See also Allan R. Shimer, *History and Genealogy of the Shimer Family*, vol. I (1908), and Gaius Marcus Brumbaugh, M.S., M.D., *Genealogy of the Brumbach Families* (1913), for other descendants of Heivert and Elizabeth (Rittenhouse) Papen.

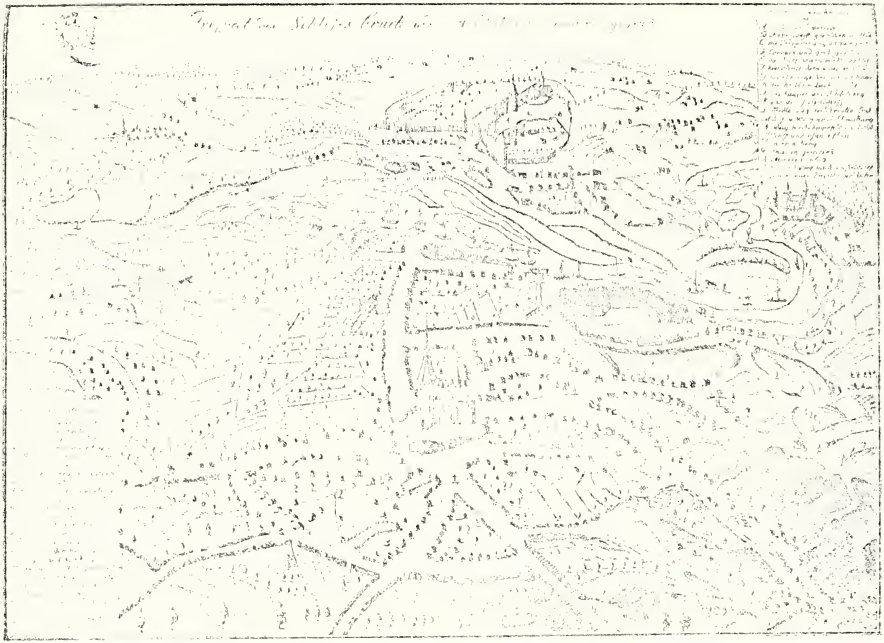


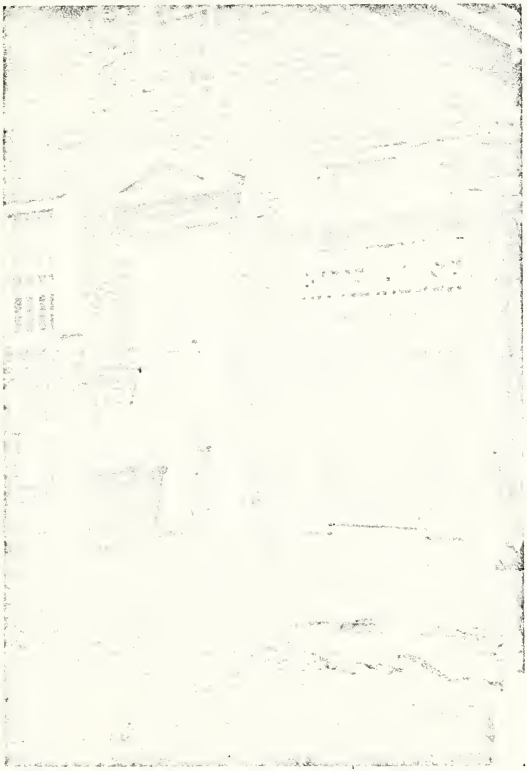

RITTENHOUSE WATER MARKS

I. 1692; II. 1694; III. 1696; IV. 1698-1700; V. 1716; VI. 1719.

*The Mennonite Quarterly Review* XVI No. 2 (April 1942), p. 121.

*Above*: House built by William Rittenhouse on the Wissahickon Creek in 1707. Photographed by Milton Rubincam. *Below*: View of the Castle of Broich and Mülheim-an-der-Ruhr about 1690-1700. From: Klanke and Richter, *Geschichte der bergischen Unterherrschaft Broich sowie der Stadt Mülheim-an-der-Ruhr* (1891).

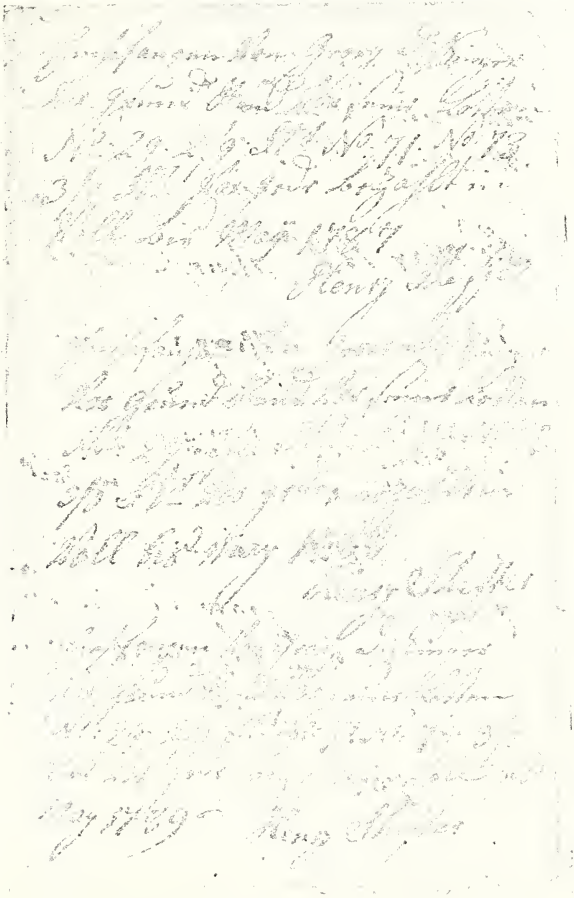




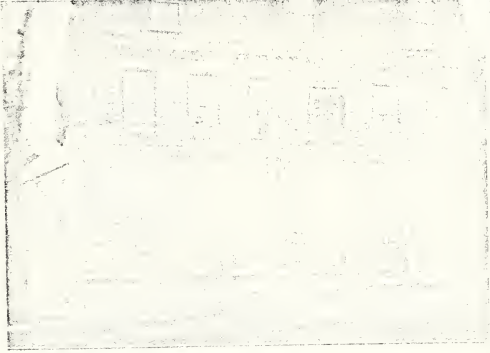
Monument to the memory of William Rittenhouse, Mennonite Churchyard, Germantown Avenue at Herman Street, Philadelphia, Pa. Erected by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission and the Rittenhouse Memorial Committee, 1919. Photograph by Milton Rubincam.

Mose was a hired man on the Schaeffer farm, at that time owned by John Steinmetz, an elder of the Reformed Church in Schaefferstown, and the great-grandfather of Thomas R. Brendle who was reared in this house. Mose was called "Unser Mose" by John Steinmetz and his wife, Nancy. This dwelling house is still occupied.

*Left*: John Steinmetz and wife, Nancy, owners of the Steinmetz farm on which Moses Dissinger was servant. *Right*: Mose as a young man, about 1842, when Mose was 18 years of age at the time of his conversion. Original in the Steinmetz family album in possession of the writer, Thomas R. Brendle.



Page from Georg Dissinger's receipt book for ground rent paid on lots 29, 71, and 73 in Schaefferstown, to Henry Schaeffer, son of Alexander Schaeffer, founder of the town.



THE FRANKLIN HOUSE, BUILT BY ALEXANDER SCHAEFFER IN 1[illegible]

One may suppose that Mose did some of his carousing at this old hotel in Schaefferstown before his conversion. Photo about 1900.

*Left*: The Evangelical Church of Schaefferstown, of which Mose was a member and in which he preached. It is now the town fire house. The front entrance, the fire siren cupola and the tin roof are the main changes made since its construction. A sandstone between the two half circular attic windows has the inscription: "Die Salems Kirche der Evangelische Gemeinschaft, 1847." *Right*: Side entrance to the church.

Side view of the Evangelical Church building, locally called the "meeting house," in Schaefferstown, looking east on Main Street. In the distance is the steeple of the Lutheran Church. The Reformed Church is west of the Evangelical Church.

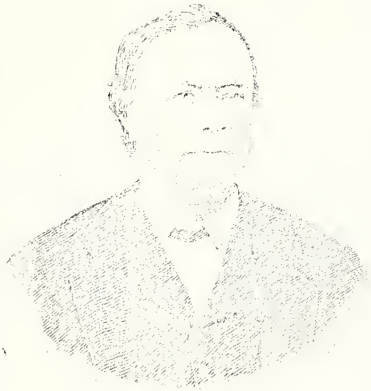
The Evangelical Church in Palmerton in which Mose preached, 1866.

Mose Dissinger and his two sons, 1856. The author believes this to be Mose's autograph.

Picture of Mose taken from Yost's "Reminiscences," 1911. The best and probably the last photograph of Mose.

First known picture of Mose in print. Taken from "The Sunday-School Messenger of the Evangelical Association," October 1, 1885.

*Below*: The inside of the back cover of Mose's New Testament. An abbreviated sermon outline seems to be noted here.



Moses Dissinger.

A

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

—OF—

MOSES DISSINGER,

PREACHER

OF THE

Evangelical Association.

BY HENRY STETZEL.

ALLENTOWN, PA.

For sale by J. H. GERNANT, 46 North Eighth Street.

PRICE 5 CTS.

Frontispiece and title page of Stetzel's English edition. Note the autograph of the not[illegible]

Moses Dissinger.

Kurze

# Lebensgeschichte

— von —

# Moses Dissinger,

Prediger der

**Evangelischen Gemeinschaft.**

Verfaßt von Heinrich Stetzel.

Allentown, Pa.
Zu haben bei Jesse L. Gorantlo.
1892.

Frontispiece and title page of Stetzel's "Brief Biography" in German.

The pulpit upon which Mose preached when pastor at Allentown. When the church was dismantled the old pulpit was salvaged and taken to the Milford Campmeeting Grounds near Zionsville. There it was occupied by Fred, son of Mose, on a visit to the East.

*Right.* Pocket edition of the New Testament which Mose carried. It had been given to the father of Mrs. Elizabeth Cornog by Fred C. Dissinger, son of Mose. On one of the fly leaves there is this presentation: "This Testament was owned and used by my father, Moses Dissinger. Presented to Solomon N. Dissinger by F. C. Dissinger."

# Das Neue Testament unsers Herrn und Heilandes Jesu Christi,

nach der deutschen Uebersetzung D. Martin Luthers.

Nach der Hallischen Ausgabe.

Neu-Berlin, Pa.
Gedruckt und herausgegeben von der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft.
1841.
Stereotypirt bey T. Douglas Wyeth, Philadelphia.

Tombstone in Clearfield Cemetery, Clearfield, Kansas. The inscription: "Moses Dissinger / Prediger der / Ev. Gemeinschaft / Gest. Jan. 25, 1883. / Alter / 58 Jahre 10 Mo. 8 Tage."

The family has played its part in widely separated areas of the world. Starting from Germany in the seventeenth century, it built the first paper mill in the British Colonies and gave the American Mennonite Church its first minister. It fought in all of our wars from the Revolution to the present time. The first Professor of Astronomy and the first Vice-Provost at the University of Pennsylvania was a Rittenhouse. It gave to the United States the first director of its first mint. Rittenhouses have sat in the legislatures of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Missouri, Colorado, and perhaps other States. Rittenhouses have been judges and mayors. In the female lines its representatives have led armies, conquered yellow fever, and served their Nation as Congressmen and Senators. Rittenhouses have played their part on the stage of history in all sections of the United States as well as in Canada and Korea. Even in the present century the Rittenhouse family continued its tradition of providing "firsts"—in 1922, Reverend Daniel Franklin Rittenhouse, who later served as President of the Southern California Baptist State Convention, established the first radio station owned and operated by a church. In religion the family has strayed far from the Mennonite piety of its pioneer American forebears. It has provided ministers for a number of Protestant denominations—and boasts at least one Catholic priest, Reverend James Clair Rittenhouse.[48] A bibliography of the published writings of the Rittenhouses would form an impressive index to the thinking of the descendants of America's first paper maker and Mennonite minister and bishop *de facto*.

Collectively, the Rittenhouses stand in the front rank of Pennsylvania German families of distinction.

[48] John W. Gilfert, *Ancestors and Descendants of "Charles Rittenhouse" of Sugarloaf Township Luzerne Co., Pa. Also a Few Descendants of his Sister "Mary"*, a huge chart of one branch of the descendants of Peter Rittenhouse (died 1748), son of Gerhard and grandson of William (1644-1708), states that Rev. James Clair Rittenhouse (1897-1934) "was a priest, died in Tenn., buried in Scranton, Pa."

# HONORS TO AMERICA'S FIRST PAPER MAKER

THE importance of William Rittenhouse's achievement in building the first paper mill in British North America and so giving the present huge paper-manufacturing industry of the United States its start, and his work in founding the American Mennonite Church, has received appreciative recognition from historians of the industry and of the Church.

Recognition has come to him in other ways, too. On July 12, 1919, the Pennsylvania Historical Commission and the Rittenhouse Memorial Association unveiled a granite marker to his memory in the old Mennonite Burying Ground on Germantown Avenue, above Herman Street. The little stone church, erected in 1770, was crowded with members of the congregation and many visitors. Speakers on this occasion included the pastor, Rev. John W. Bayley; Walter B. Bertolet, who delivered the historical address on Rittenhouse; Dr. Thomas L. Montgomery, State Librarian, who, in the name of Governor Sproul, formally presented the marker to the trustees of the church; and Benjamin Bertolet, who accepted the memorial on behalf of the trustees.[1]

Thus the Church honored its first pastor. But twenty-one years later the American paper making industry had an opportunity to honor its founder on the 250th anniversary of the building of the first paper mill in this country. The observance was sponsored jointly by the 250th Anniversary Committee of Roxborough-Manayunk-Wissahick-

1 *The Philadelphia Record*, Sunday, July 13, 1919.

on, the National Genealogical Society, of Washington, D.C., the American Institute of Graphic Arts, of New York, and the paper-manufacturing industry.

July 1, 1940, was designated as "William Rittenhouse Day." The principal address was delivered by Hubert S. Foster, advertising director of The Mead Corporation, the parent firm of the Dill & Collins Paper Company, which traces its origin to the Rittenhouse firm. The invocation was pronounced by Reverend Howard Landes, pastor of the Mennonite Church of Germantown, and the benediction by Reverend S. G. Von Bosse, pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church, Roxborough. The present writer read messages of greeting from the National Genealogical Society and the American Institute of Graphic Arts, both of which he represented. The Honorary Chairman of the occasion was H. H. Hanson, President of W. C. Hamilton & Co., paper makers, of Miquon, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. A special feature of the celebration was the actual making of paper by the ancient methods employed by the Rittenhouses. This was an exhibit of W. C. Hamilton & Sons. In commemoration of Rittenhouse's achievement, the Library of Congress prepared an exhibit on the progress of paper manufacture.[2]

A visual reminder of William Rittenhouse is his stone house built in 1707—famous as the birthplace of William's great-grandson, David Rittenhouse. But it should be remembered also as the home of the first American paper maker and Mennonite clergyman. It stands in what was once called "Rittenhousetown," for nearby (across the creek) were clustered other houses where lived members of the Rittenhouse family. The following editorial appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper in 1932:[3]

2 Milton Rubincam, "The 250th Anniversary of American Papermaking (1690-1940)", *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, vol. XXVIII, no. 3, Sept. 1940, pp. 65, 66.

3 From a scrapbook on the David Rittenhouse bicentenary in the writer's collections. Unfortunately, the name of the Philadelphia newspaper was not noted at the time the editorial was clipped for the scrapbook.

RITTENHOUSETOWN

> The bicentennial celebration yesterday and today in honor of David Rittenhouse, who was born April 8, 1732, according to the old calendar, has directed attention again to the remnants of Rittenhousetown. Five little old houses today mark the site of that once flourishing community, of which Rittenhouse street, running from the Wissahickon into Germantown, was the main thoroughfare. As early as 1847 Rittenhousetown had its own volunteer fire department, school and church together with textile, grist and paper mills, which derived their power from Wissahickon Creek and Paper Mill Run.
>
> The closing of these mills and the extension of Fairmont Park along the Wissahickon led to the removal of most of the buildings in Rittenhousetown. But the survivals include the community's oldest house, in which the famous Philadelphia scientist and patriot was born. Nearby is the site of the first paper mill in America, which was built by the grandfather (*sic!* great-grandfather) of David Rittenhouse. This interesting old landmark by all means should be converted into a Rittenhouse museum as has been planned.

Unfortunately, the hope expressed in the last sentence has not been fulfilled. The house has not been converted into a Rittenhouse museum.

In the preparation of this biography all of the available documents and the references to Rittenhouse in scores of books dealing with the history of paper making and of the Mennonite Church have been utilized. We have attempted to present as completely and accurately as possible, as well as critically, the life story of a German leader in the little community on the Wissahickon. His work in starting the American Mennonite Church on its historic course

can not be overestimated; it is apparent from the surviving letters written by his colleagues that he had won the regard and esteem of his co-religionists. We can not do better than close with the fine tribute paid to him by the anonymous author of the unique little pamphlet put out twenty-nine years ago by the Eastwood Wire Corporation of Belleville, New Jersey:[4]

> To W^m^ Rittenhouse our vast paper-making industry in America today, and those who serve it, owe a debt of *gratitude* and affection that can never be repaid.

4 *An Historie For Young & Olde About the Beginnings of Paper-Making, Including the Founders, in America, with Histories of their lives and illustrations, with Especial Reference to William Rittenhouse* (1930), p. 18.

# MOSES DISSINGER

*Evangelist and Patriot*

BY THOMAS R. BRENDLE

91 + 92

# PREFACE

This biography was presented as an address at the Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania German Society at Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania, October, 1956, and was amplified for publication.

The author desires to thank all persons who have helped him in the preparation of this biography.

He is particularly under obligation to the Reverend Gordon Oswald, of Palmerton, Pa., and to Mrs. Elizabeth Cornog, daughter of the Reverend S. Neitz Dissinger, of Summit, New Jersey, and to the Calvin Studio, of Allentown, Pennsylvania.

The section entitled "Memorabilia" from pages 134 to 185 contains documents worthy of remembrance and for the record.

Mr. Spencer Wenger, of Egypt, Pa., has been a vademecum to him, in visiting the places where Mose lived and labored. The author's deepest gratitude is given to him. Gratitude is also expressed to Miss Carol Reinert, for the friendly and understanding assistance she gave in the preparation of the manuscript for publication.

Reverend Moses Dissinger was commonly called Mose Dissinger, rarely Moses Dissinger, or Reverend Dissinger. We have followed the common people who esteemed him so much and always called him Mose.

*The Author.*

# ANCESTORS

TWO preachers have become a part of the folklore of the Pennsylvania Germans: William Henry Stoy, preacher and doctor of the latter half of the 18th century and Mose Dissinger of the 19th century. It is of the latter I shall speak.

I want to speak of him without appearing in the role of admirer or critic. I would not idealize his robust democracy nor his virile patriotism, nor would I find fault with the ways or content of his preaching and of his teaching. I would not take the position of one of his personal friends who, in 1928, lamented that "no one today preaches the evangelical faith as truthfully as Dissinger did," nor the attitude of an unfriendly critic who said that Mose was all "sound and fury, signifying nothing." Nor would I even take the place midway, the golden mean. Not as a preacher, teacher, moralist, and least of all as a historian, but as one who would tell of the ways of an evangelist, how he won his place in the memories of a numerous people and in the hearts of not a few of them, would I speak of Mose Dissinger who, though dead, yet speaketh.

A knowledge of a man's ancestry often helps to the understanding of his character. A rich strain of impulsive emotional nature is inherent in the Dissinger family.

The Dissinger family came from Gersweiler, Duchy of Saarbrücken, according to a note on the fly leaf of a Saur hymnal now in the Historical Library of Eastern Theological Seminary at Lancaster.

In 1761, Eberhart and Anna Catharine Dissinger came to America with their nine children, and two sons-in-law,

the Reverend Peter Mischler, a Lutheran clergyman, and John Jacob Vogelsang. They sailed from the port of Rotterdam on the ship "Snow Squirrel" and landed at Philadelphia, October 21, 1761.

According to the records of the Evangelical Church of Gersweiler, John Eberhart Dissinger was married at the age of 24 years to Anna Catharina Meyer, a daughter of John Henry Meyer and his wife Sophia, of Gersweiler. To this union were born eleven children, nine of whom lived in the year 1761 and accompanied their parents to America. The children were as follows:

John Nicholas, born March 23, 1736. Died May 15, 1737.

Catharine Elizabeth, born February 27, 1738. She was married to John Jacob Vogelsang.

Anna Catharine, born October 14, 1739.

Susanna Elizabeth, born March 19, 1742.

Marie Catharine, born May 17, 1743. She was married to Rev. Peter Mischler.

John Henry, born November 18, 1745. He was married in the year 1774 to Anna Marie Krumbine, of Schaefferstown.

John George, the ancestor of Moses, born September 17, 1748; baptized September 24, 1748. Sponsors John George Dissinger, uncle of the child, and his wife. He married: first, Judith Louser; second, Catharine Elizabeth Schweitzer, both of Schaefferstown.

Catharine Margaret, born January 8, 1751.

John Simon, born June 29, 1754, Died in infancy.

Margaret Elizabeth, Born March 20, 1756.

Maria Susanna, born November 10, 1759. The sponsors at her baptism were John Jacob Loethy and wife, of Durmersheim-on-the-Kolmar.

Gersweiler, a small city, lies on the east bank of the Saar River, a navigable stream that flows into the River Moselle, and finally joins the Rhine River at the City of Coblentz. It is about fifty miles directly east of Metz and approximately an equal distance west of the Rhine River. Directly across the river from it lies the city of Saarbrücken.

On account of the poverty of the family, one of the sons, George, was sold into five years of servitude after the family landed at the port of Philadelphia. He served two years, and then, having had a violent quarrel with his master, ran away, and, according to family tradition, to mislead his pursuers, went west as if for Lancaster County, but later turned north and came to Schaefferstown in the southern part of Lebanon County, Pa.

It is unknown where the Dissingers settled upon arrival at Philadelphia. In the record book of the Jordan Lutheran Church, near Allentown, Pa., are these records:

November 18, 1763, Jacob Vogelsang and his wife are sponsors at a baptism.

Baptized March 4, 1764, Johann Lorentz, son of Peter Mischler and his wife, Catharine, born, February 16, 1764. Sponsors, Johann and Lorentz, sons of old George Ruch and Salome and Catharine, daughters of Henry Dorny.

In 1766, Susanna Philippina a daughter of Peter Mischler and his wife, was baptized; she was born January 5, 1766. Johann Henrich Dissinger was her sponsor.

February 11, 1762, Jacob Vogelsang and his wife, Catharina Elisabetha brought a dear daughter to Holy Baptism. Name, Maria Catharina.

May 19, 1769, Heinrich Dissinger was a sponsor at a baptism at Jordan.

In the records of the Jordan Reformed Church is this entry:

Born March 21, 1767, baptized March 29, 1767, Marie Salome daughter of John Nickel Gebbardt and wife Margaretha, sponsor, Eberhard Dissinger.

These records indicate that Peter Mischler and Jacob Vogelsang and probably their brother-in-law, Henry Dissinger and the father, Eberhard (John Eberhart) were at Jordan, 1762-1769; and it is probable that Mischler did some preaching there.

If the family tradition that George Dissinger served two years of the five for which he was indentured and then absconded, joining his parents in Schaefferstown, is correct, then his parents shortly after their arrival at Philadelphia must have proceeded to the vicinity of Schaefferstown, probably stopping off for some time in the Jordan region. Schaefferstown lies in the southern part of Lebanon County, not far from the boundary line between Lebanon and Lancaster counties. It is one of the oldest towns in Lebanon county.

On January 17, 1736, the Penns gave to John Miley a patent for 347 acres of land with six percent allowance for roads. John Miley and Catharine, his wife, sold the entire tract on March 19, 1736 to Durst Thomas.

Durst Thomas was affiliated with the Ephrata Cloister Community; maybe Miley, also. Thomas died leaving Martin Thomas, Durst Thomas and Anne of Ephrata, as his heirs. The land upon which the town is built came to Alexander Schaeffer from Martin Thomas, being in part from the Durst Thomas estate.

Schaeffer laid out much of the land which he bought from Martin Thomas in town lots which he sold at the rate of five shillings a piece reserving a yearly ground rent, varying in amount from 2¾ to 3 shillings per year. The plan of the town was determined by two great roads running through the valley, the one north and south and the other east and west and intersecting each other where the

center of the town was located. The one east and west was called Main Street and led from northeastern Lancaster County to Cornwall; the street running north and south was known as Market Street. It joined the Tulpehocken region to Lancaster.

The Reformed and Lutheran Churches were established in this town in the eighteenth century, the United Brethren and the Evangelical Association churches in the nineteenth century.

In a day book of the tavern-store, conducted at Schaefferstown by Alexander Schaeffer, for the year 1771 (in part), 1772 and 1773 (in part) there appear the names: Old Dissinger, Henrich Dissinger, Reverend Mischler, and Jacob Vogelsang. The names of Reverend Mühlberg and George Dissinger appear for the three years; also the names of John Lauser, father of Judith, wife of George Dissinger, and Casper Schweitzer, the first doctor at Schaefferstown, and father of Catharine, the second wife of George Dissinger.

Eight children were born in all to the two marriages of George Dissinger. With his first wife, Judith Lauser he had issue:

John, married Catharine Neff
Henry, born November 6, 1777
John Henry, born October 24, 1780, married Polly Valentine
Catharine married Philip Brecht
John Michael, born February 2, 1789, married Anna Maria Garrett
Elizabeth born October 6, 1792
With his second wife, Catharine Schweitzer, he had issue:
Daniel, born October 5, 1797
Elizabeth, born October 20, 1802, married Abraham Brendle; died March 8, 1883

John (son of George) and his wife, Catharine Neff, had issue:

John, born September 11, 1792
George, born January 1, 1794
George, born April 11, 1795
Michael, born November 1, 1797
Catharine, born September 8, 1799
Henry, born November 7, 1801
Elizabeth, born September 12, 1803
Margaret, born September 15, 1806
Benjamin, born August 30, 1808
Samuel, born May 7, 1812

John (son of John, son of George, son of Eberhart) and wife, Catharine, had issue:

Marie, born November 26, 1816
Henry, born October 19, 1818
John, born August 23, 1820
Lydia, born October 21, 1822
Moses, born March 17, 1824
Edward, born October 17, 1827
Samuel, born March 20, 1830
Franklin
Cyrus
David C.
Polly

Catharine Schweitzer was under twenty years of age when she became the second wife of George Dissinger. Their daughter Elizabeth became the wife of Abraham Brendle. They were the parents of Daniel Dissinger Brendle who married Rebecca, the daughter of John Steinmetz. According to traditions that came down through the Brendle family, Elizabeth Brendle was the person who taught Mose Dissinger to read and write. She was assisted to some extent by Rebecca Brendle, who was the writer's

paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Brendle being his great grandmother.

Reverend Mischler preached near or in Schaefferstown, or as the settlement was then known, Heidelbergtown, before Muhlberg. It may have been through the influence of Reverend Muhlberg (Fred. Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg) that he moved to Virginia and ministered unto a congregation in Benneltown County—a hundred miles south of Winchester.

In 1769, at the Twenty-Second Convention of the Lutheran Ministerium held at Philadelphia, June 25-27, Peter Mischler applied for reception into the Ministerium.*

> A so-called Lutheran preacher, Peter Mischler by name, applied for reception into the United Ministerium. He also had several letters from partisans in several congregations as his recommendation. The President answered he might appear before the Ministerium tomorrow morning at ten o'clock, when his case would be considered.
>
> I. Here is to be noticed what had been done in his case yesterday, June 26, in the afternoon. He was called, when the members of the Ministerium and delegates were assembled, and asked:
>
> 1. Why he disturbed congregations, and supported several restless parties in them? *Answer*: He had not known that there was hostility in the congregations.
>
> 2. Rev. Mr. St——— rose and related that he, Mischler, in the preceding fall had visited him (Mr. St———) with four men from the Nordkiel congregation. Mr. St——— had, in a friendly way, warned him that he should have nothing to do with factious congregations. Notwithstanding the warning, he with his party crept into the Nordkiel congregation; after-

*Documentary History of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium*, 1748-1821. Philadelphia, 1898. Pages 112, 114 ff.

wards he also accepted the church in Tulpehocken which was formerly in the hands of the Moravians, and became the successor of a vagabond. Further, he sided with the revolting party which he had before supported a vagabond in Heidelberg against Mr. Kurtz, Sen. Then he also crept in the Warwick congregation and caused a split, yes, even recently had a boy break through the window, open the church door, and entered it with his party to hold so-called worship, although he knew that the elders and deacons of the Warwick congregation had applied to the United Ministerium, and had several times been served from Lancaster. Mischler had nothing to produce in his defence, but replied: He would give up the said congregations if the Ministerium would receive him. He was therefore ordered to be examined today.

II. The transactions then followed thus: The President requested him to be truthful in his answers, because they were to be recorded in the Protocol.

1. Where was he born? *Answer:* In Gersweiler in Nassau Saarbruck.

2. Of what religion were his parents? *Answer:* The father, Roman Catholic; the mother, Lutheran.

3. Did he receive instruction and confirmation in the Evangelical or the Catholic religion? *Answer:* In the Evangelical, and confirmed by Rev. Mr. Rust, in Mohlstadt.

4. Did he study languages, namely, Latin, Greek or Hebrew? *Answer:* No; only a little Latin.

5. Did he learn an honorable trade, namely, tailoring? *Answer:* Not completely (*zunftig*).

6. How long has he been in Pennsylvania? *Answer:* Seven years.

7. What induced him to give up his tailoring, and act as preacher? *Answer:* The late Rev. Mr. Schertel.

8. Had he a call to the ministry from any congregations where he lived? *Answer:* No.

9. Did any one ordain him? *Answer:* Yes; Rev. Schumacher, in the Blue Mountains.

10. Where was he since then and where did he preach? *Answer:* In Albany, Township, Berks County, in Upper Windsor, at the Brick Church; with Nicolaus Langen, in the Blue Mountains, in Tulpehocken, Heidelbergtown, and finally in Warwick, twelve miles from Lancaster, where his party broke open the church for him and he held a so-called worship for them.

Hereupon the President read several letters which were written by Mischler's parties in Tulpehocken, Heidelbergtown, etc., to the Ministerium, and they praise him because of his orthodoxy, and demand his reception in almost threatening language.

Several members of the Ministerium made the following remarks: 1. Rev. Mr. St——— cast up to him that he had shown Philip Strauss a Hebrew Bible, and boasted that he possessed not a little ability in the ancient languages. To Nicolaus Ensminger, he is said to have boasted that in languages he was equal to all the United Preachers. Mr. Mischler denied having made such boasts. The President said, that in order that the truth might be known, they would make a test themselves, and 1, handed him the Psalms of David in Hebrew, and asked whether he knew the letters and the language? *Answer:* No; he knew nothing of them. 2. He held the Greek Testament before him, asking whether he knew the language? *Answer:* No; he did not know the letters. 3. The President handed him something in Latin, and requested that he should read and translate into German. He read a few words, but could not translate.

4. *The President:* There are people who, if they

have not learned them, regard languages only as husks and shells by which men are puffed up, and boast that they possess the kernel and necessary gifts for the office through inspiration of the Spirit without the external shells. Some easy questions would therefore be put to him in the mother tongue.

1. *Rev. Mr. Sch——— asked:* What is Religion? *Answer:* To build us up on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. (President: The answer is not unfair, since the man seems not accustomed to abstracts, but to concretes.)

2. *Another member of the Synod:* How can he prove that there is a God? *Answer:* From the Bible. *Question:* But if the enemies will not accept the Bible how can he prove it then? *Answer:* From creation.

3. *Another:* What are our Symbolical Books? *Answer:* The Old and New Testament.

4. Another desired that he explain the verses, Jeremiah 23:5, 6, "Behold the days come, said the Lord," etc. Instead of the explanation he (Mischler) made a brief address of undigested, disconnected thoughts, which showed that his mind must be a chaos.

5. *Another asked:* How he could defend the Baptism of Children? There was no answer, and profound silence followed:

*President:* We now see that neither the necessary shell nor the kernel needful for the important office, neither mediate or immediate gifts are present. In all congregations those hating truth and light can be found, who seek tools and support them for this purpose, that they may embarrass and distress faithful laborers, ruin congregations, make void the power of godliness, and build up the kingdom of Satan. He who lets himself be hired by such tools, need have nothing but a lying and slanderous spirit, a hardened heart and conscience and will finally be cast into the

fire as a used-up rod before God, before all rightminded Christians, and at last even before his own adherents!

*Question:* What is to be advised, and what to be done?

*One:* He has a wife and children, and needs support.

*Answer:* Would it not be better if he would support himself with his honorable trade as a tailor?

*Question:* Whether we could not assist him to a position in school?

*Rev. Mr. St——— answers:* Mr. Mischler had written him a long letter with his own hand, from which it appeared that he could not write well a single letter of the alphabet, or spell. The communication was without any connected thought or style, and yet the signature read: "Parr Mischler minister."

Rev. Mr. Kurtz, Sen., advised that he be made to promise that he leave the small congregations and parties, where regular preachers are laboring, and remain where there are no preachers at all, that he be exhorted to good behavior, and be referred to the next synodical meeting.

Mr. Kurtz, Jun., thought he should be shown to districts where there was the greatest destitution of the means of grace.

*Answer:* Who can do this, with a good conscience?

*The President asked:* Whether he would cease from the disturbances and vexatious divisions, and entirely leave the parties in Warwick, Heidelbergtown and Tulpehocken, turn to God and reform? *Answer:* Yes, Yes.

*The President:* But if he continued to let himself be used by Satan and his followers as a wretched tool, the authorities in Lancaster would bring him and his adherents before the Justice for breaking into the

Warwick Church, and then the above Protocol would serve against him, and help hasten his ruin. He should in future take heed not to make people believe that he understood Latin, Greek and Hebrew, etc., and that he had an immediate unction and call to the ministry, because the evidence of both appear plainly enough from his conduct before this public meeting, and the Protocol of yesterday and today. He again promised that he would in the future have nothing to do with the parties in Warwick, Heidelbergtown and Tulpehocken, departed and wept before the door.

We have no strong hope that he will keep his promise, for the old *Diabolus* will not give up his favorite Machiavellian maxim, *divide et imperabis,* so long as he is not bound and his followers are so blind, hardened and evil-minded that they prefer to buy and drag in such instruments, in order that they may quench their little wealth, and, in the name of their father, revenge themselves against the good work. As far as the leaders are concerned, they are accustomed to say: "We know quite well ourselves that our pastor is ignorant and shallow, but for that very reason we keep him, because he serves our purpose and we can vex the others this way. For this is a free country, where neither Pope nor Council, neither Synod nor Coetus has any authority over us."

# EARLY LIFE AND CONVERSION

THE date of the birth of Moses has appeared in print erroneously as the year 1825. Although the records of the Lutheran Church at Schaefferstown give March 17, 1825 as his date of birth, we conclude that after considering all available evidence that he was born on March 17, 1824. He was baptized soon after his birth by the pastor of the Lutheran church at Schaefferstown. In his early youth he was hired out to farmers to work for his board and clothing, getting absolutely no schooling. He worked for a number of years on the Steinmetz farm, which adjoins Schaefferstown on the south, the home of Rebecca Steinmetz, for whom he held such a lifelong regard: "Er had die Welt gedenkt vun ihrer [He thought the world of her]."

At the age of eighteen he was converted at the revival meetings held in the town and became a member of the Evangelical Association. The congregation with which he united passed out of existence about fifteen years ago and the meeting house has become a fire hall.

Up to the time of his conversion Mose was the "whoopee" boy of the community. He was the leader in mischief making, carousals, fighting and "packe"—catch as catch can wrestling. His good nature and ready wit, however, won for him tolerant consideration on the part of the community.

Coming home from drinking carousals or from frolics he would set all the dogs of the community to howling, make night hideous with his own tones, strike at fences with his club, waken sleepers by calling their names. But

the good people wakened from their slumber, would only say: "Sis alrecht—sis juscht dar Mose [It's all right; it's only Mose]."

"While preaching in Lehigh County in a country church, he was much heckled by a bunch of 'Bully Boys' who made noises, imitating different animals. He turned to them and said, 'Where I come from we keep the animals in the barn; here the people bring them to church.' But the heckling continued till finally he called a member of the church to open the door and he threw them out one after the other."

* * *

A letter from Mrs. Elizabeth D. Cornog, daughter of Reverend S. Neitz Dissinger, Mose's nephew:

"Mose's first wife is buried at Schaefferstown, Pa. Her maiden name was Yocum [sic! Her name was Clark]. The second wife's name my father Rev. S. Neitz Dissinger can't recall but he, Mose, brought her to his [S. Neitz Dissinger's] parents' home. My father's mother said 'Mose is she saved?' Whereupon Mose snapped, 'Do you think I would sleep with the devil?' "

* * *

"Somewhere I heard that Solomon Neitz influenced Mose as a missionary. His life in Kansas was extremely hard. His daughter Laura told us that he swam streams, braved snow storms and wore himself out."

* * *

"Uncle Mose [S. Neitz Dissinger's uncle] wore a wig. It was purchased for him when he served the Philadelphia parish. It proved too warm and tradition has it that he removed it while preaching, stating it came from the devil. The devil was always a very real person to Uncle Mose."

* * *

"Mose did outline sermons and quoted from the Bible by the yard, pardon this comparison. I've looked for a

little book that has a sermon outline but for the life of me I can't find it."

[In the 1930's, James Dissinger, the Dissinger family historian told the author that he had gotten from someone a sermon outline by Mose, which he regarded as "wholly authentic." This may be the outline to which Mrs. Cornog refers. The author is entirely convinced that Mose could read and write. Also, though Mose often appeared clownish, he was never a clown.]

A letter from Jacob Nelson, present pastor at Clearfield, Kansas, where Mose preached reads:

> Rev. Moses Dissinger came to Kansas in 1879 and was appointed to the Eudora Circuit which consisted of the preaching places known as Eudora, Willow Springs (now Worden), Deer Creek (now Stull), Clearfield, Lawrence and Franklin. He died on January 25, 1883 and is buried in the Clearfield Cemetery. I am enclosing a film showing the stone over his grave. He was known as quite an eccentric character but very useful in the work of the Lord. The following story from Reverend C. F. Erffmeyer is among the papers of his granddaughter. At that session of the annual conference held at Cosby, Missouri, Reverend Moses Dissinger was called upon to pray during the opening session of the conference: "We had a wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Rev. Dissinger was in the spirit of prayer and this is part of his petition. 'O Lord, our heavenly Father, Thou art rich in mercy; we are so poor, so needy, worms of the dust. We are opening this annual conference session; Thy table is loaded with the things we need. We pray Thee, take the four corners of the table cloth and just empty it all out upon us.' There was wonderful power upon the brethren, a melting time."

Mose used to say "that he had fought 17 battles before he was 18 years of age and won. But the last battle which he fought was the hardest." It was the battle with his own wicked nature—"seinre beesi naduhr."

After his conversion he was taught to read and write by his friends, two of whom were his grandfather's stepsister, Elizabeth, married to Abraham Brendle, and Rebecca, daughter of John Steinmetz, married to Daniel Brendle, son of Abraham Brendle. Years after when he had become prominently identified with the affairs of the Evangelical Association in Schaefferstown he was called upon to adjust a scandal which had arisen in the congregation. Among those called to bear witness was Rebecca Steinmetz. After she had spoken, Mose said: "Sell iss genung, die Beckie Schteemetz glawich meh wie eich all minanner [That ends the matter, I believe Beckie Steinmetz more than the all of you put together]." Rebecca Steinmetz was a sister of Reverend Dr. John Steinmetz, a prominent Reformed pastor of Reading.

Stetzel tells that when Mose worked on a farm not far from Schaefferstown part of his work was to drive the cattle to pasture in the morning and to bring them home at night. "In the evening he went out, opened the bars and called the cattle, but they would not come. Wildly yelling he dashed among them, which made them run away as fast as they could. In this race he jumped on the back of a cow and stood upright and while the herd was running with all its might toward and throught the bars, he gave another vigorous yell. The next moment he again stood on the ground. Then Mose followed the herd quite composedly. The next time he came to fetch the cows he simply opened the bars, stepped aside and bade them come and they came. This proved his favorite saying: 'Wie mer sie ziegt, so hot mer sie [As you train them so they will be].' " Such incidents may have given origin to the widespread belief that Dissinger once traveled with a show.

After his conversion he took an active part in the services of the congregation and also attended the services at Kleinfeltersville, a village several miles to the east of Schaefferstown, in the Millbach area, and the birthplace of the Evangelical church. His ready wit and fearless speech soon gained for him more than a local reputation. He felt called to the ministry. He was licensed to preach in the year 1853. A year later he was received as a preacher on trial at the conference held at Pottsville. In the year 1856 at the Conference held at Allentown he was ordained as a deacon and three years later he was made an Elder. Thus for a period of 25 years he preached in the First Pennsylvania Conference. His appointments were as follows:

1856 Lancaster Circuit of the Lebanon District.
1857 Lehigh Circuit of the Philadelphia District.
1858 Schuykill Circuit of the Orwigsburg District.
1859 Re-appointed to the Schuykill Circuit.
1860 Lehigh Circuit of the Lehigh District.
1861 Re-appointed to the Lehigh Circuit.
1862 Womelsdorf Circuit of the Lebanon District.
1863 Lancaster Circuit of the Lebanon District.
1864 Re-appointed to the Lancaster Circuit of the Lebanon District
1865 Philadelphia Station of Philadelphia District.
1866 Re-appointed to the Philadelphia Station.
1867 Allentown station of the Allentown District.
1868 Re-appointed to the Allentown Station.
1869 Carbon Circuit of the Allentown District.
1870 Weissport Station of the Allentown District.
1871 Returned to the Allentown Station.
1872 Fleetwood Circuit of the Reading District.
1873 Fleetwood and Lyons Station of the Reading District.
1874 Pleasant Valley Circuit of the Easton District.
1875 Re-appointed to the Pleasant Valley Circuit.

1876 Slatington Circuit of the Allentown District.
1877 Re-appointed to the Slatington Circuit.
1878 Slatington Station.

On February 26, 1879, at the Conference held at Allentown he was given his credentials and joined the Kansas Conference, to which he belonged to the day of his death.

# ON THE BATTLE LINE

WHEN Mose was appointed to the Philadelphia station doubt was expressed whether he could adapt himself to the city. He enjoyed an immediate success. As Palm Sunday drew near one of his leading members told Mose that he was to preach a good sermon on that Sunday and that a new suit of clothing and a silk stovepipe hat would be given him for the occasion. When Mose returned to the parsonage, he said, "My, what a suit! I never expected to wear such a suit and I never had such a hat on my head before." He then inquired of Reverend Yost who was at the parsonage at that time, "What did Brother T. say that next Sunday was?" "Palm Sunday," Yost answered. "Palm Sunday, Palm Sunday," he exclaimed. "They have curious Sundays here in Philadelphia. I never heard of such a Sunday. I am to preach a Palm Sunday sermon and don't know what it means. I am completely lost." And he asked Yost, "Can you help me out?"

As things turned out the sermon which Mose delivered on that Sunday was a powerful one. He, himself said of it, "Never in my life did I preach better. Die Watta hen nicht schtarrick genug raus kumma kenne, sie hen batzelbam iwwer ananner schlaje missa [The words could not come forth fast enough, they had to somersault over each other]." After the service the brother who had seen to the appropriate fitting out of Mose for Palm Sunday, came forward, drying away the tears, and said, "Thank God, Brother Dissinger, such a Palm Sunday sermon was never preached in Philadelphia before, come to my store tomor-

row. You shall also have a dozen white pocket handkerchiefs." The good brother had noticed that Mose used a colored handkerchief.

When Mose came to the conference from Philadelphia, some one asked him how he made out. The answer came "Gud, dar Sack is foll Geld, die Karch foll leit un dar Weiwel geleddert [Pocket full of money, church full of people and the devil whipped]."

Reverend Yost gives this answer, "The devil is whipped, over one-hundred converted, and I have $1200 in my pocket."

Moses recognized his strength and his weakness. He said: "I cannot preach like my brethren. When a carpenter, I used to hew close to the line, and so I must do in my preaching whatever knots there are in the way. I once tried to preach like my brethren, but my experience was that of little David when he thought he would like to fight the big mouthed blasphemer, in Saul's armor. He soon found out that if he were to fight in Saul's armor instead of slaying the giant the giant would cut off his head. But with the weapon to which he was adapted he knocked in the gable end of the big sinner. Only with the weapon the Lord has given me can I whip the devil, even if he does come upon me with stilts as high as a three story house."

Two expressions employed in this discourse have been preserved in our folklore,: "Wie der Mose Dissinger g'sawt hut, em Deiwel's gewwelend von der Hell neig'shlogga" and "Der Mose Dissinger hut g'sawt er wear nat bong waech em Deiwel un won er gaya ihn kaemt uff shtelza drei shtuck hoch." His preaching made a powerful impression upon his hearers and his reputation as a fearless preacher of the Truth lives on to this very day.

During his early ministry he was invited to preach at what was then Millerstown, Lehigh County. There were rude people living there who purposely came to the meet-

ings to create a disturbance. At the appointed time the hall was filled. Moses opened the services. Singing, praying and the beginning of the sermon took place without interruption. But all at once the crowd began to talk aloud and to create a nuisance. Mose stopped short in his sermon and proceeded to give the noisy fellows a lecture.

"Horcht amoll, ihr Kols dort hinna. An eich is alles Hund, was an eich is, except die Haut. Eich fehlt juscht noch en Hundshaut, dann wisst mer besser, was ihr seid; awer so meent mer doch, ihr waert Menscha. Ich hab net gewisst, dass es do noch so verfluchta Gadarener hot. Ihr seid so voll Deifel as der Gadarener war. Eich will ich nau saga, was ihr zu duh het-*Ruhig* misst ihr sei, odder ich kumm nunner un schmeiss eich zu der Dihr naus dass ihr die Hels verbrecht. Ich kann en halb Dutzend so Berstelcher, wie ihr seid ableddera. *Dissinger hess Ich!* Un wann ihr mir's net glaabt bleibt juscht vor der Dihr steh, wann die Versammlung aus is, no will ich's eich beweisa. ["Listen you fellows back there; you are all dog, every part of you, except the skin. You need only a dog's skin to let people see what you really are. If you didn't have a human skin on you, we'd know you better; but as it is, people still think you are human beings. I did not know that there are any of those accursed Gadarenes here in Lehigh County. You are as full of devils as were the Gadarenes. I'll tell you now what you will have to do; you must keep quiet or I'll come down and throw you out through the door that you'll break your necks. I can lick half a dozen such stuck-up chaps as you are. *Dissinger is my name!* And if you don't believe me, just stand outside when the meeting is over, and I'll show you]."

"Then he turned to the well behaved in the audience and with fine humor said: 'But there are many orderly people here too, who have come to hear the word of God, I would advise you to secure carefully your hog stables, for if the devil should ever leave these Gadarenes and enter your hogs they will surely die, every one of them.' "

Scarcely had he said this when there entered a man who neglected to remove his hat. Him Mose addressed as follows: "and you old sinner, take off your hat or I'll teach you manners if you have none. I'll show you how to behave in places like this."

On another occasion young men disturbed the meeting by frequently going in and out of the meeting house. This Mose could stand no longer. Turning to the young ladies of the congregation, he said, "Young ladies, my advice to you is not to marry those young men. They're not well. They have weak kidneys. They'll die young."

Moses' sharp tongue could not always quell disturbances. A gang of drunken rowdies tried to break up a campmeeting held near Catasauqua. As they came on through the dark woods they drove the worshipers before them. Suddenly Mose leaped in upon the crowd, calling out "Schtend eier Grund [Stand your ground, brethren, don't go back any farther]." Quickly he seized the leader and hurled him to the ground. He seized another and threw him to the ground. Then calling out "Brieder nemmt Hewwel un schlagt druff [Brethren take clubs and sail into them]." He seized another and turned him in a somersault to the ground. The rowdies disappeared and the services proceeded in peace.

An Allentown paper published a report of this meeting, stating that the ministers had earnestly endeavored by their preaching to convert sinners, but there had been one among them who wanted to convert them with clubs. "Des war gewiss dar Mose. [That surely was Mose]."

Mose made terrific attacks upon the coldness of formal religion within and without his denomination. While making such a denunciation at Ironton, several persons got up and walked out, and Mose loudly observed, "Wanne mar die Windmiehl dreht geht der Schprau hinnenaus [Turn the windmill and the chaff flies out back]."

At another time when he made a similar denunciation

two men arose and walked out and again, quick as a flash came the parting shot, "I have seen before that dogs lying around the stove jump up and run out when boiling water was squirted upon them."

Mose liked movement in his sermons and in the services. At a prayermeeting which dragged Mose broke out with the words, "Ihr krekst do rum wie so en alte set Mihlraeder, wann net genunk Wasser do is for sie recht azutreiwa [You hem and haw like a set of old mill wheels when there is not enough water to keep them going properly]."

At Bernville he came to a church which few persons attended. He boldly announced that he would fill the church. At his first service he preached while he stood with one leg hanging over the pulpit. That was the only time he preached to an empty church in Bernville.

Mose has been compared to Billy Sunday. There are those who regard him as the greater. The Billy Sunday campaigns were thoroughly organized in the community by the various churches with enthusiasm but the elements of spontaneity were lacking. One wonders whether Billy Sunday had ever heard of Mose. As stated earlier, there was a Sunday family at Schaefferstown during the lifetime of George Dissinger and there were also Sunday families in the Womelsdorf-Bernville region of Berks County.

While Mose was preaching at Ironton, a Reverend Doctor sent his grandson to hear him. He told how one evening a paper was sent up to the pulpit with a text on it and the request that Mose preach upon it. He took the paper, looked at it, scratched his head and said: "Liebe brueder des is en griddlicher text awwer er wadd recht ausgepredigt [This is a critical text, brethren, but it will be rightly preached]."

The story is told that one day while walking along the road he came to two men working on a stone heap. They got into an argument and became rather heated about the matter and suddenly Mose pushed one of the men against

the other which sent both sprawling on the ground. As they got up one said "Parre Dissinger, is des Christenthum?" The reply came "Ne awwer es iss en annrer Verstand gelannt uff en Schteehaufe. [Pastor Dissinger, is this Christianity? No, but it's teaching another understanding on a heap of stones]."

A man who attended the last series of meetings held by Mose in the East before leaving for Kansas tells the following: Dissinger announced a hymn out of the "echt alt Lutherisch Gesangbuch." (I have tried to discover such a hymnal, unsuccessfully. I suppose it was a privately printed hymnal with a limited local circulation.) He announced the hymn and then lined it out. The first two lines were:

"Erschrecklich ist das Mann nicht
Der Hoelle Pein betrachtet."

The hymn consisted of many stanzas, one of which was:

"Die Siffer werden allsemal
Dort bei einander sitzen.
Sie werden in der Hoellenqual
Den suessen Wein raus schwitzen."

As Mose read this stanza he gnashed his teeth together. The hymn had an awe inspiring effect which the hearer remembers to this day (1920), fifty years after.

The same person told of another incident in Dissinger's career. While preaching at a "bush meeting" near Scheidy's he became very much wrought up. He leaped up into the air. Coming down he broke through the improvised platform to the ground. But immediately bounding back he cried out without a pause in his address, "Gott sei dank es is nedd in die Hoelle gange."

He admonished converted people not to remain in a lifeless church where there are no prayer meetings and whose members are mostly wicked people. "The Bible

compares the wicked to swine and the converted to sheep. Now swine and sheep don't suit together. Swine like to wallow in dirt, while sheep do not. Swine eat rotten flesh, while sheep live on clean food; and where so many hogs are there is scarcely anything but hog food which the sheep cannot eat and so these have to starve. The hogs multiply too, faster than do the sheep. Morever the hogs devour the young sheep. Thus the hogs in a short time would prevail so that no sheep could live among them. Such living together is unbecoming."

We know of one occasion at least, when Dissinger was outwitted in the City of Lebanon. Reverend Johnson of the Reformed Church once met him on the street and said, "Mose we are going to put a cross on our church." "Is that so?" said Mose, "Why don't you put a mule there?" "We were considering that," replied Reverend Johnson, "but we concluded that you would be too heavy."

In one of his circuits Mose came into contact with an independent clergyman. One evening when a number of this man's followers were present he spoke thus, "If you were not such a low and ungodly people you would feel ashamed to have such a vagabond for your preacher. I will take a rag, dip it in whisky and drag it on the road for ten miles, and I will bet anything that your drunken priest will soon get the scent of it and will chase it like a hound after a fox, and you fellows all after him, for you all like to suck at the whisky rag."

In a short time Dissinger had driven the preacher out of the neighborhood.

This Boanerges frequently attacked the prevailing fashions. On one occasion while thus holding forth his wife entered the meeting house wearing a new hat. The preacher stopped, and then exclaimed, "Un da kummt mei aldi mit em Eckschonk uff ihrem Kopp [And here comes my wife with the corner cupboard on her head]." The explanation is that Mose sold a corner cupboard, may-

be one that he, himself, had made, and his wife took the money and bought a hat with it.

In Allentown after a series of meetings he said, "Nau will ich ebbes du as der Deiwel in seim Lewe noch nedd gedu hodd [Now I am going to do something that the devil never did in his life, I'm going to leave Allentown]."

Mose had a habit of preaching against the devil, who was very real and very personal to him. One day in going down Hamilton Street in Allentown he passed a crowd of smart aleck loafers on one of the street corners, and as he passed they jeeringly asked, "Well Mose, wie is der Deivel heid?" But Mose was ready for them and he replied. "Buwe, Ich gleich zu hoere, ass ihr eich bekimmert wege eier dadi. [Boy's, I am glad to hear that you are concerned about the health of your father]."

The Gadarene swine were a favorite illustration for Dissinger. Once when he was holding services in Northampton County a crowd of fellows created a disturbance in the rear of the room. He paused in his sermon to deliver this blast. "Once upon a mountain the devils which had been driven out of men went into swine, and the swine threw themselves into the depths of the sea. Darch all die Yahre ware selli Sei verlora awwer guck amol, jetzt sind sie gfunna. Dart hinna hucka sie un die Deifel sin noch in ne [And lo these many years they have been lost, but now behold they are found. Back there they sit and the devils are still in them]."

Dissinger on one occasion, in 1861, was preaching at Emaus ( now Emmaus). A young man who had professed his faith, found opposition to his action on the part of some person in that community. This brought forth the following:

"Do in Emaus gebts en besondere Art Deifel; So Deifel wies do hot hab ich mei lebdag noch net agetroffa. Wann do en Mensch sich bekehre will, hot der Deifel gewiss so en halb Dutzen Hetzhund do, for enwidder abzubringa.

Do howwa im Saufhauss kenna sie rumleia un Dag un Nacht saufa, un er gebt nix drum; wann sich awer eens bekehra will do sehntmer'n im Town rumspringa, mit ma Stock in der Hand un Hensching ah, dass er sich bal die Beh bis an die Knie abspringt, for die Seel widder abzubringa. Do gehts wie der Luther gsaht hot; wann en Herd Sei im Stall am fressa sin, un mer holt ener raus un stecht sie dot, so fressa die annera fort un gucka net rum, wies denna geht, wu dot gstocha werd. So gehts do: do werd fortgsoffa un net rumgeguckt bis drunna in der Hell. Des is Wohret, un ich fercht mich net, die Wohret zu sage, un wann der Deifel uf Stelza geloffa kummt."

[Here in Emaus there is a particular kind of a devil. Such devils as are found here I have not met in all my life. Here if a man seeks conversion, the devil certainly will set half a dozen dogs on him to drive him off. Up there, in yonder rum-hole they can lounge about and go on drinking day and night, and he doesn't care. But if anyone wishes to be converted, you can see him running about town carrying a cane and wearing gloves and almost wearing his legs off to his knees, trying to lead that soul away. It happens, as Luther said, when a herd of swine is eating in a stable, and you take one out and cut its throat, the rest will eat on and not even look around to see the fate of the one that is being killed. So it is here; they drink on and don't look around until they are down in hell. This is the truth and I'm not afraid to tell the truth, though the devil should come walking on stilts].

Mose reached the heights of his denunciatory eloquence in his attacks upon drunkenness:

"Sehnt juscht amol die Saflodel a. Die hot der Deifel so erschrecklich verhaust, dass mer meent, sie kenta ihr lebdag nimme zurecht gebrocht werra. Viel davun hen net juscht ihr menschlich Ehrgefhl fortgsoffa, so dass sie alles Schlechtes un Dreckiches duh kenna, was der dreckig Helldeifel hawa will, dass sie duh solla, ohna dass sie sich

schaema, awer sie hen ah noch ihra Verstand versoffa. Es is jo bal nix meh an ihna was zum a rechta Mensch gheert. Der Deifel hot sie jo ganz zu seina Schuhbutzer lumpa gemacht un hot sie bal all naerrisch un witig gemacht, un en grosser Dehl vun ihna hen bal Leib un Seel versoffa; un so saufa sie fort bis der Deifel sie in de Hell nunner holt, wu die Sauflodel hiekumma.

"Nau, guckt sie juscht amol recht a, wie sie auswennich aussehna. Sie hawa Nasa wie rota Pefferkep, Ohra wie Fastnacht-kucka, Beich wie Fesser, un macha Gsichter wie die Fichs, wann sie Weschpa fressa; un bei all dem werd immer noch rudlos gsoffa, un springa noch der Drambottel wie die Bullfresch uff die rota Lumpa. Wannmer net wisst dass Jesus Christus so niedertraechtige Menscha wie sie sin schun agenommahot un noch rechtschaffna Menscha aus ihnen gemacht het, so kent mer ken Hoffnung hawa dass so versoffena Dramratta vum Saufdeifel erloest kenta werra; awer Jesus Christus hot Gnade erworwa for alla Sinder, un da sin ah die, wu im Schlamm der Sinda ganz dief versunka sin, net ausgschlossa.

"Darch die Kraft des, Evangeliums kann der verdarwenscht Sauflodel errett werra un Kraft bekomma dass er im a Strom Dram, der em bis ans Maul geht, schwimma kent, ohna, dass er Luscht het, davun zu drinka, un wanns em der Deifel ah abieta deet, so kent er darch die Gnadenkraft des Evangelium dem Deifel widersteh, un ken Saufdeifel in der Hell kent ihn zu dem verfluchta Drammsaufa zwinga. Darum bekehrt euch."

[Just look at the drunkards! These the devil has ruined so fearfully that one might think they could never in a whole lifetime be restored. Many of them have not only drunk away all human sense of honor so that they can do anything mean and dirty that the dirty devil in hell wants them to do, without feeling any shame; they have also guzzled away their understanding. There is scarcely anything of a real man left in them. The devil has made them

his shoe cleaning rags, he has made nearly all of them crazy and mad; a great many of them have almost drunk away body and soul, and so they drink on until the Devil carries them down to hell whither all drunkards go.

Now, take a good look at their outward appearance. They have noses like red peppers, ears like Fasnacht cakes, bellies like barrels, and they make faces like foxes eating wasps; but in spite of it all, they go on drinking; they jump for the rum bottle like bullfrogs for red rags. If we did not know that Jesus Christ has received such degraded men and made honorable men of them, we could not hope that such drunken rumrats could ever be delivered from the devil of drink. But Jesus Christ has obtained grace for all sinners, and even those who are the most deeply sunk in the mire of sin are not excluded. By the power of the gospel the most wretched drunkard, can be saved and gifted with power, so that he could swim in a stream of rum reaching to his mouth without the desire to drink of it; and even if the devil should offer it to him, he could, by the power of grace in the Gospel, resist the devil, and no devil in hell could force him to the accursed drinking of rum. Be ye, therefore, converted!]

Complaint was once made by a woman, who was a member of the church that the minister never called at her house. It was an open secret that the reason for this was the filthy condition of her house. Mose said he would accept her invitation to dinner and see whether he could not induce her to adopt more sanitary methods. When called upon to ask the blessing at the table, he did it in this fashion:

"Gott segne die dreckich Frau; Gott segne des dreckich Essa; Gott segne den arme Mose was des essen muss [God bless this dirty woman; God bless this dirty food; and God bless poor Mose, who must eat it]!"

At a campmeeting in Northampton county a clergyman of another persuasion took a seat on the side intended for

women, the rules of that day, as earlier in New England, demanding a segregation of the sexes. During the singing he would not rise; during the prayer he would not kneel, showing utter disregard for the rules of the meeting. The next day Mose preached upon observing proper order in worship. "But I don't want you to do as that stupid ox did yesterday who sat among the women wearing his stovepipe hat, who did not rise for singing, nor kneel for prayer, nor even take off his hat. I don't want you to behave as that ox behaved."

Dissinger once went with one of his colleagues to the funeral of a young man who had lived a notoriously sinful life. The officiating clergyman preached on the text, "Because I live ye shall live also," and during his discourse cast aspersions upon the methods of working which were used by Dissinger and others. The sermon cut Dissinger to the quick and he had it made known that he would preach on the same text on the coming Sunday so that justice might be done to it. When the time came he opened up in this wise:

"Nau will ich den Text prediga, wu der Paff do haus verschlarft hot. Got im Himmel, was haw ich schun den text gedauert! Es hot mich grad gemahnt as wammer en Sau en Sack voll Hawer hieschmeisst un losst da Sack zugebunna. Die Sau schnuffelt dra rum un riecht, das ebbes drin is, awer sie kanns net kriega. Un so is der gotlos Paff um den Text rum un hot gerocha, dass ebbes drin is, un hot en so verschnuffelt, bis er ganz verschlarft war, un hot da Kern doch net kriet. Awer heit soll dem Text Gerechtigkeit widerfahra. Die ewig Gottes Wahrheit in dem Text soll nau gepredigt werra."

[Now I'm going to preach on the text which the priest out yonder chewed up so badly. God in heaven knows how much pity I have felt for this text. It has seemed to me just as if you had thrown a bag full of oats to a hog and left the bag tied up. The hog will sniff around it, smell that there

is something there, but cannot get at it. Just so that godless preacher went around his text, smelling that there is something there; he sniffed it over, chewed it all up, and yet he failed to find the grain. But, today justice shall be done to the text. God's eternal truth contained in the text shall now be preached]."

But enough, let us turn to another side of this singular person.

Dissinger took great interest in the conflict between the North and the South. He was an immense help to Governor Curtin and the union cause in carrying the state, in the state and also in the national election.

From the pulpit and from platform he thundered against Jeff Davis and his iniquitous rule. In his sermons during that period he would use illustrations taken from the front.

"When the Gospel is proclaimed by converted ministers it is just like a battery with which fortifications are shot down. With this battery we can batter the gable end of hell, so that all dark spirits of hell tremble with fear and terror, and the hairs of old Lucifer himself stand on end. But it must be preached by men whom God has called and equipped with the unction of the Holy Spirit; men who are not afraid to preach the pure truth that sinners may be converted to God and God's kingdom may be extended, that devils may be driven out and the devil's kingdom destroyed. Men of this sort are the good Lord's sharpshooters, who, with this battery made up entirely of rifle guns, always hit the nail on the head and shoot down all the accursed rebel forts, and in the end will capture old Jeff and his entire hellish crew. These gain one victory after the other. Then, too, there is often a mighty cry of victory, and one jubilant shout after the other, in the camp, for this is a people that can shout for joy. Many are opposed to this, which is not to be wondered at, since they never gain a victory over the devil's kingdom of sin. Those soldiers that never win a battle raise no shout of joy, but

those that thunder into the devil's kingdom so that sinners are awakened and converted raise a cry of victory. Not they who lose a battle, but they who win it, can shout and exult for gladness. Satan also has respect for those who, as he knows, are led by Christ, a general who never lost a battle.

"But there are such band box boys who know nothing of conversion and regeneration, nor care to know. They came with paper guns and with paper balls [thus he characterized those who read their sermons, a practice to which he was bitterly opposed and, to tell the truth, for which he was not fitted] which they have brought out of school. They think they, too, can fire upon the devil and do great deeds; and when they have fired off their paper battery a few times they think they have shot the devil dead; but they do not know that they have not yet touched a hair of his back or of his tail. Shooting like this is fun for the devil, and where such shooting is done he will lie down at the front of the pulpit and go to sleep and snore, for he knows that no harm will be done him there. But as the rifle guns thunder the eternal truth of God, like fiery balls, into the dirty sinful camp of Satan, his sleep is at an end, and he runs like mad to save his tattered reign, for then there are reverberations in every corner of his dirty kingdom."

# FOR THE UNION

STETZEL tells of one of his patriotic sermons. "A certain Evangelical minister who had announced such a sermon made arrangements with Moses that the latter should speak in conclusion and that the first sermon should be brief in order to give Moses sufficient time for his closing remarks. Thus it was agreed. The sermon was begun while Moses sat quiet still on the pulpit. Something was said of our free government, which with all its imperfections, is still the best in the world, and the only free popular sovereignty on earth. Nobody, therefore, should be indifferent as to its standing or falling. "Mose still kept quiet. Then something was said about the injustice of the slaveholders who keep four millions of human beings in bondage, living in abundance and wantonness on the fruits of their hard toil, and who are now waging war to make us slaves also.

"While this was being said, a violent tremor pervaded Mose's entire body. He began to shuffle his feet back and forth with increasing rapidity and violence. He was like a race horse getting ready to start. The preacher knew that Moses was now in full trim and said 'Amen'. Instantly Moses jumped up clapped his hands and exclaimed; 'God be thankful for the truth, fresh from the shovel. So I like it, when the truth is pushed off the shovel clean and fresh.'

"Further on he said: 'Thanks to God! The devil has got one more of the rebel generals. I have been thinking, if the devil minded his business, he had fetched them long ago. Perhaps he would long ago have carried off rebel Jeff, but he still has need here of such filthy mean-spirited characters who help him to do their accursed work.' "

Professor Shenk tells of Mose's services as a political speaker. He took the stump for the Union ticket in 1864. His most famous speech during the campaign was delivered in the courthouse in the city of Lebanon on the Friday evening preceding the presidential election. Strenuous efforts were made by the local Union committee to carry the county of Lebanon for Lincoln and Johnson by a large majority and its success in doing so may, at least partly, be attributed to the enthusiasm stirred up by Dissinger.

"In this closing week of the campaign three great mass meetings were held in the city of Lebanon. On Thursday evening, November 3, an enthusiastic welcome was given Governor Curtin; the following evening Dissinger spoke; while on Saturday evening the Honorable A. J. Herr, of Harrisburg, one of the most eloquent Pennsylvanians, later speaker of the senate, was the principal orator; but neither the great war governor nor the eloquent lawyer could stir up the enthusiasm of the masses as did plain Moses Dissinger. He had returned from a tour of Lancaster County, where he met with some opposition in the neighborhood of Columbia. He was stoned while speaking in the open air, as was Hamilton; but, while Hamilton said, 'In the face of such striking arguments I will retire,' Dissinger turned toward the other speakers and said, 'Brethren can you stand it? I believe I can.' But the stones flew too thick and fast and Moses and his companions retreated, whereupon Mose said, 'If only I had my pistol the devil would have had fresh meat for breakfast.' "

I have heard it a score of times in Lebanon County "Dar Mose had gesagt 'Buwe Wann ihr's schtende kenne kann ich aw—Boys if you can stand it I can too!"

"This Lebanon courthouse address was opened with prayer, and it is related of Mose that in his prayer, he thanked the Lord that for once he was able to get the lawyers on their knees. In this remarkable speech, refer-

ence was frequently made to the secret military societies said to have been organized in Berks County to assist the Confederates. For this purpose secret councils were held at night in barns, stables and other places suitable to their purposes.

"One of the Lebanon papers gives this comment on the meeting. 'Rev. Moses Dissinger made an able Union speech in the courthouse on Friday evening, Nov. 1. His earnest and telling hits brought down the house. The speaking was in the German language. Mr. Dissinger has been doing noble services for his country.'

"Dissinger spoke in part as follows: 'Wisst ihr, wie mich die Rebellawert-schaft in der South gemahnt. Ei, grad, wie so en alte verlumpte Bauerei, wu die Fenza ball all zamma leia, un alles mit Hecka un Dorna un Unkraut verwaxhsa is, wu ken Dohra meh an der Scheirer sin un alles leer un armselig aus-sicht. Am Haus sin die Fenschter-scheiwa all verbrocha, wu Niemand meh wohna kann. Un wu mer ah nix Lewendiges atreffa kann as wie so en halb verhungerter Ochs uf em Mischthaufa, wu noch so dreckige Strohhalma aus em Mischt ziegt un fresst, dass er net ganz verhungert un noch so lemmerlich brunmelt. 'Ich muss verhungera! Ich muss verhungera!' Newa dra is noch so en alter Seistall mit so era alta langrieslicha Los drin, un wann sie den Ochs heert, knarrt sie mit em Riesel im dreck, 'Hu-gu! Hu-gu!' Nau guckt amol, ebs net grad so geht im Rebelltum. Wanns Volk in der South, grad wie der halbverhungert Ochs, ruft, 'Ich muss verhungera! Ich muss verhungera!' So knarrt der alt Jeff, die alt Sau, mit seim Seiriesel im Dreck, 'Hu-gu!' "

[Do you know of what this rebel government in the south reminds me? Why, it is just like an abandoned farm, whose fences are all broken down, while everything is overgrown with bushes, thorns, and weeds, where the barn has no doors left and nothing within, and everything looks empty and miserable. At the house all the window

panes are broken, and no one can live in it. No living creature can be found except a half-starved ox on a dung hill, who pulls dirty straws out of the dung and eats them to save himself from dying and hunger, and roars dolefully through his empty belly, 'I'll starve to death! I'll starve to death!' Nearby is an old pig stable with an old long-snouted pig in it, and when she hears the ox she grunts, with her snout in the dirt, 'Hoo-goo! Hoo-goo!' Is it not like that in rebeldom? When the people of the south, just like the half-starved ox, call out, 'We'll starve to death! We'll starve to death!' old Jeff, the old hog, grunts with his pig's snout in the dirt, 'Hoo-goo! Hoo-goo!].

The Copperheads of the Knights of the Golden Circle were very numerous in Berks County. They had done much to obstruct the orderly functioning of the government. One of these disloyalists was arrested and placed in the Reading jail. The others marched on Reading to secure his release. They were routed at the Harrisburg bridge by the fire company of Reading.

In his address at Lebanon Moses took occasion to pay his compliments to them:

"Vor da nerdicha Rebels, da Copperheads', do 'Golden Circle' Kerls un Kihstall operators braucht mer sicht net zu fercha for des sin lauter Cauards. Des hot mer jo gsehna wie des Huberle in der Dscheel war in Reading, do hot jo der Captain, mit da Heidelberger Brigeed vum 'dumma Vertel' ihn mit Gewalt rausnemma wolla. Un wie sie an die Harrisburg Brick kumma sin do hawen's die Reading Feierleit ausgfunna dann hawa sie en Paar Wasserpritza rausgenumma un sin uff sie los. Un wie die 'Copperheads' des gsehna hen sie awfanga zu kreischa. 'Die Kanona kumma, Buwa! Gott im Himmel, do gebts doda Leit!' Nau sin sie ausnanner gesprunga, en Deel hen die Hiet verlora, en Deel sin unner die Wege dorch un hen die Kep verschunna, un so sin sie all ab un heem. Vor so Cauards, wu mer mit Wasserschpritza abjaga kann, braucht mer

sich net zu fercha. Mer kenna des ganz Rebellgschwader sauwer nunner aus un ableddera."

The translation is weak: [Of the northern rebels, the Copperheads, the Golden Circle fellows, and the cowstable operators, one need not be afraid. They are nothing but cowards. This one could plainly see when Huber was in jail and the captain of the Heidelberg Brigade from the 'Dumb Quarter' wanted to take him out by force. As they came to the Harrisburg bridge they were discovered by the Reading firemen who brought out a few of their sprinklers and went straight for them. And as the Copperheads saw this they began to yell, 'The cannons are coming, boys! God in heaven, there'll be dead people!' Then they scattered in all directions. Some lost their hats, others ran under the wagons and skinned their heads, and thus they fled and went home. Of such cowards who are frightened by water sprinklers, one need not be afraid. We can give the whole rebel squadron a clean downright licking].

Dissinger and the Reading firemen sounded the death knell of disloyalty in that region. Even in translation the force of the castigation is still felt.

You will recall that Moses was stationed in Philadelphia at the time of the closing of the Civil War.

Now we must quote from Professor Shenk. The incident, to which he refers, the speaker heard his elders discuss in the time of his youth. On account of his ignorance of the facts of American history he was for a long time unable to fully understand the situation. Let us quote:

"The morning following the most tragic night of American history (the night of the assassination of President Lincoln) was one long to be remembered in the city of Philadelphia. The strict orders of the great War Secretary had put all suspicious places under the strictest surveillance. Excited crowds surged backward and forward ready to wreak swift mob vengeance upon any who might appear

to be accessories to the awful tragedy of the murder of the great Emancipator.

"It was at this time that a young man (Charles Zerbe, Esq., a native of Schaefferstown, Pa.) destined to become an honored member of the Lebanon bar, appeared upon the streets eager for all the news that the bulletin boards might furnish. While reading the bulletin in front of the office of the Philadelphia Press, then edited by the Hon. John W. Forney, Secretary of the United States Senate, someone tapped him on the shoulder, called him by name and asked him to interpret in German the news regarding President Lincoln. As they were thus conversing an angry mob gathered fearing that the German tongue was being used to conceal facts regarding the crime, assumed a menacing and threatening attitude. The young man explained in the English tongue that he was merely interpreting the news to a German preacher, who was a staunch Union man, and saved himself and the preacher from what might have been a serious situation."

If I remember rightly, according to the impression that I got from the elders the mob had already laid hands on Dissinger, but be that as it may, the incident is full of pathos that one who had borne the burden and the heat of the day in the fight for loyalty, and whose heart must have been ready to break for the stricken president, should be suspected of disloyalty.

In the year 1879 Dissinger left Pennsylvania for Kansas, where he joined the Kansas Conference. Here he preached until 1883. He died January 25, 1883, aged 58 years, 10 months and 8 days according to his tombstone. He was buried in the Turkey Creek Cemetery, Douglas County, Kansas.

Indeed, a singular man! To many, including the speaker, a great one.

# A CO-WORKER LOOKS AT MOSE

REVEREND William Yost, a life long friend, writes in his *Reminiscences:*

"His enthusiasm at revivals and campmeetings knew no bounds. Without any intermission he kept on singing, praying, shouting and working with penitents at camp meetings and quarterly meetings from morning till night, and during the night until the sun rose, being gifted with unusual powers of physical endurance.

"He became known throughout the church as a very singular man and everywhere people came in crowds to see and hear this marvelous preacher. He hurled divine truth with the force of a Titan. He was as bold as a lion and knew no fear. He was gifted with a marvelous memory. What he read and heard his memory retained, and he could use the knowledge acquired in his own peculiar manner . . . What he learned from others was so mingled up with the product of his own mind that it seemed to come from its native mint.

"Though scarcely able in the first years of his ministry to read his text correctly, yet he would preach with such fluency, originality and power that it was a marvel to all who heard him.

"He was much given to prayer and study, spending hours, on his knees praying, or reading the Bible, and studying his sermons. Wherever he was staying, when the time for going to the service had arrived he would withdraw for secret prayer, saying, 'I must talk with the Father before going to meeting.'

"It was his custom to call praying, talking with the

Father. He had a marvelous gift in prayer. I doubt whether I ever heard him pray in houses of worship and at campmeetings that the place was not shaken and the people simultaneously sprang to their feet while shouts of joy and cries of mercy filled the place. At family worship where he had lodged for the night, he would pray until every converted member of the family was either leaping for joy or shouting aloud the praises of God. He frequently made the remark, the devil must be whipped before breakfast. He will then easily stay whipped the whole day! In company with him at campmeetings, when the time approached that he was to preach he would say to me, 'Let us go out in the woods. We must talk with the Father. I am to preach and you know I'm only one of the Lord's sprinkling cans: if he doesn't fill it with water fresh from the throne, I am walking around the garden endeavoring to water the Lord's plants with an empty can and the devil would laugh at me. I can only give to the people what the Lord gives to me.'

"Brother Dissinger's sermons on regeneration and on the necessity of man making preparation for his eternal salvation were always of a solemn nature, more free from his humerous and rude expressions. . . . I heard him preach on these subjects in which he would quote from ninety to one hundred and thirty passages of Scripture, to substantiate his assertions, mentioning book, chapter and verse, and reciting them word for word, without the use of notes. His talent in this direction was extraordinary."

Reverend Yost gives several illustrations to show how Mose handled difficult situations. Once at the end of a conference year when his salary had not been paid he addressed his congregation as follows:

" 'The Conference year is now at an end, and there is considerable of a shortage in my salary, but that doesn't trouble me. I don't lose any sleep over that, the Father has always cared for Mose and will do so at this time. Some-

times the pasture has been rather scant, but at other times I have been in clover up to my knees.

" 'Now when I am done preaching, it is an easy matter for Father K. to step up like a man and pay ten dollars; his son John will put five on top of that and his son Jake, who never was afraid of a dead snake, will fork out five dollars also and others will follow suit.' "

"When the collection was counted and he placed the seventy-seven dollars in his pocket he said, 'Praise the Lord, brethren, the Father always cares for Mose.'

"His sense of humor and his sarcasm were manifest on numerous occasions. At a campmeeting where he knew members were much opposed to fashions he preached from the text, 'Deliver us from evil,' and said: 'You will observe that these words do not apply to the ungodly who are as full of evil as a dog is of fleas, but to the Christians, and teaches that they have evils from which they must be delivered. Here is pride by which some, especially women, so transform themselves that they look anything else than human beings, and frighten horses on the road.'

"His words brought forth a chorus of amens. It was the day of hoop skirts. Mose continued: 'There is another evil, the greatest of all and the root of all. It is stinginess.'

"The pews were silent. The amen corner was still. Mose continued: 'Brethren, what's the matter? Why don't you shout amen? When I preached about pride you shouted amen as if your throats would burst now when I preach about stinginess, the highest of all evils, you hang your heads, and pinch your lips so closely together that a man could not drive a hog bristle through with a sledge hammer.' "

"When Bishop Esher, a deliberate speaker, first preached to the East Pennsylvania conference a brother minister asked Mose what he thought of the bishop. Mose quickly answered: 'Die Kuh gebt gude Milich awwer sie lossts langsam runner [The cow gives good milk but lets it down slowly].' "

# MEMORABILIA

## HIS PARENTAGE AND PLACE OF BIRTH

REV. MOSES DISSINGER was born on March 17th, 1824, in Schaefferstown, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, the fifth born child of his parents, John Dissinger, 2nd, and wife, Catharine Connor. On his father's side Moses was descended from solid Germanic stock which had been planted upon American soil, in the year 1761, by John Eberhart Dissinger, his great-great-grandfather. And, on his mother's side, he was descended from just as firm an Irish stock, though we are unable to trace this lineage to an earlier date than to Moses' grandfather, "Irish-Jimmy" Connor, as he was intimately known. Succeeding a brief sketch of the subject's place of birth, we will delve yet deeper into his ancestral lineage; feeling that a knowledge of his forbears may give some enlightenment to the hereditary strains and traits possessed by this "Eccentric Character."

SCHAEFFERSTOWN lies in the southern end of Lebanon County, the center of one of the richest agricultural districts in the state of Pennsylvania. A few miles to the southward the fertile limestone plains of the Lebanon Valley merge into the rolling uplands of the South Mountains, which form a barrier between the Lebanon Valley to the northward, and the Lancaster Valley, to the southward. The town was formally laid out in 1744 by Alex-

*This sketch of the life of Moses Dissinger is among the papers now in the hands of the Reverend Gordon A. Oswald, of Palmerton, Pennsylvania. He has kindly permitted its publication. The author's name is missing, but undoubtedly it was James Dissinger, of Schaefferstown.

ander Schaeffer, a native of Heidelberg in Germany. Some historians consider the village to antedate, in its laying-out, any other settlement in the whole Lebanon Valley. In 1805, just 19 years prior to the birth of Rev. Dissinger, the village is thus described by Joseph Scott in his Geographical Description of Penna.: "Heidelberg, a handsome town situated at the head of Hammer Creek, a branch of the Cocalico, which latter joins the Conestogoe. It contains about 100 houses, a German Lutheran, and a Calvinist Church. It is 55 miles East by North of Harrisburg, and 74 miles Northwest by West of Philadelphia."

### HIS ANCESTRY AND NEAR KIN

I. "DIESINGER", the original spelling of the Dissinger family name indicates that the family took root from Germanic stock. The language, customs, religion, and foreign home of that first ancestral family which came to America in 1761, further substantiates the validity of our statement. Recent research in the field of this family's lineage allows the author to inform that the original family emigrated from Gershweiler, Duchy of Saarbruecken, in Germany. It was in April of the year 1761 that John Eberhardt Dissinger, 2nd, with his wife, and family of nine children, together with two sons-in-law and a grandchild, left their home in Western Germany and landed at Philadelphia, U.S.A. in October of the same year. The father of this family was a tailor by trade and died at Schaefferstown, where he had located, prior to the War for American Independence (1775-'83).

II. GEORGE DISSINGER, born September 17, 1748, in Gershweiler in Germany, was the youngest son of the above named John Eberhardt Dissinger, 2nd. On account of the poverty of the family, George was sold into servitude for a period of five years at the time the family landed at Philadelphia. He served two years, and then having a violent quarrel with his master, who was a hard-hearted man, he

ran away and made good his escape; coming to Schaefferstown where he resided all his life. During the Revolution, he was enrolled in a local company of Associators, or Minute Men, holding the rank of Ensign, or Standard Bearer. In the years following that great struggle he held the post of Constable of the Heidelberg district for upwards of twelve years. As his father, he also was a tailor by trade. He married first, Judith Lauser, and had issue of seven children, viz; John, 1st, Henry, George, Michael, John Henry, Catharine, and Elizabeth. With his second wife, Catharine E. Schweitzer, a daughter of the distinguished Dr. Casper Schweitzer, had issue of two children, viz; Daniel and Elizabeth. The father died on April 20, 1817, and his remains lie in the Schaefferstown cemetery.

III. JOHN DISSINGER, 1st, eldest son of the above George, was born in Schaefferstown on December 7, 1772. He resided in the above said town all his life where he died just prior to December 1815. He followed the agricultural vocation all his life; was one of the posse of nine men who, on the night of December 28, 1797, captured the perpetrators of that gruesome "Sheetz Murder Tragedy of Heidelberg Township" as it is known in local and county histories. During the Second War with England (1812-'15), we find John, 1st, enrolled in one of the battallions of Penna. militia, on the march from York, Penna., to Baltimore to repel further invasion of the enemy. With his wife, Catharine Neff (or Naeff), there was issue of ten children, viz; John, 2nd George, Michael, Henry, Samuel, Benjamin, John George, Catharine, Elizabeth, Margaret.

IV. JOHN DISSINGER, 2nd, eldest son of John, 1st, was born September 11, 1792, at Schaefferstown; died March 16, 1878, at Campbellstown, Lebanon County, Penna., and is there interred. Soon after his father's decease, in 1815, he was married to Catharine Connor, and the family made their home on West Main Street in Schaefferstown, John 2nd, was a carpenter by trade and specialized in the shing-

ling and thatching of roofs though he also did some small time farming on land adjoining his home. His wife, Catharine, was a daughter of "Irish Jimmy" Connor, who resided in what was then known as "Jimmy's Hollow," lying in the vicinity of Mt. Gretna, Penna., where now is located the Penna. State Militia Reservation. Mrs. Dissinger died about the year 1855 and her remains lie in the Schaefferstown Evangelical cemetery, though today no marker remains to indicate her grave. She is said to have been a fine mother, possessed of a very alert mind and ready wit; a trait her son, Rev. Moses, seems to have inherited, as well as his dramatic ability, for several of his mother's near kin became quite prominent in the theatrical profession. To this happy union was born an illustrious family of eleven children, all of whom are now deceased viz;

1. Marie, born 1816, married Bernhart Forrest, a tailor of Campbellstown, Lebanon Co., Pa., where they resided; and had issue, among others, of Dr. Albert D. Forrest, (died 1930), who was a well-known druggist of Lebanon, Pa.'

2. Rev. Henry, born 1818; a minister of the United Brethren in Christ church, and was located at Blainsport, Penna., a few years after the Civil War. He has descendants residing in Missouri and Iowa.

3. John 3rd, born 1820; moved to Naperville, Illinois in 1845, and left issue; descendants of whom now reside in Chicago, California, and New Mexico.

4. Lydia, born 1822; married Rev. Samuel Bucks.

5. REVEREND MOSES, born March 17, 1824; baptized in the Lutheran church in Schaefferstown; Sponsor, Michael Moore. This is the 'Mose' Dissinger, as he was intimately known, of whose life and services this volume treats. It was this man that would in later years tell his children, while holding them on his knee, how his grandfather, "Irish-Jimmy" Connor, would make his grandchildren Dissinger step around when he visited Schaefferstown. And

this was the Mose who would warn mischief makers in his church, in words; "That's enough from you fellows back there; you'd better not get my Irish and Dutch stirred up, or something will be sure to happen." And,—when something did happen, it resulted to the other fellow's sorrow.

6. Edward, born 1827; he was for many years engaged in the hardware and general mercantile business in Campbellstown, Pa., where many of his descendants now reside.

7. Samuel, born 1830; died in childhood.

8. Frank, born 1835; a shoemaker by trade who resided in Rexmont, Lebanon Co., Pa., for many years, and left to survive him, among others, Rev. S. Neitz Dissinger, of the Evangelical Congregational church at Lehighton, Penna.

9. Cyrus, born 1837; a Veteran of the Civil War and for many years the Manager of the Fairview Farms near Quentin, Lebanon Co., Pa.

10. David C., born 1839; held rank of Colonel in the Civil War then moved to Sunbury, Penna., where he was engaged in business attended with great success; held the office of County Treasurer of Northumberland Co., Penna., and was in 1879 a candidate for State Treasurer.

11. Katie, born 1840; married Henry Strohm.

### PREACHING FROM A HILL TOP

Rev. Dissinger, having an appointment to preach one day somewhere in Pennsylvania, arrived at the meeting house to find its entry blocked by a gang of toughs stationed before the doorway, and preventing his people from entering. It was a beautiful summer day with the coolness of evening approaching, and thinking it best to avoid trouble whenever that was possible, Moses took his stand on a nearby hill and preached to an immense crowd that had assembled and that continued to arrive all through his sermon. Of his sermon to these people, he himself said afterward; "Fur zwei Stunde ist Gottes Wort aus mein mund wie ein strom geflossen."—("For two hours

the Word of God flowed from my heart and lips in a mighty stream.")

The vast throng of people was profoundly moved; some of the sisters became uncontrollably happy and rolled down the side of the hill. Even the roudy element, who had approached to the edge of the assemblage, were dumfounded by the earnestness and inspiring eloquence of the speaker. They made no disturbance whatsoever; only listened attentively to Rev. Dissinger's discourse on the Word of God. At the close of the services, a big Irishman pushed his way through the throng and drew near to Moses on the peak of the hill. He, not knowing the big fellow's intentions, took a firm stance in readiness for an attack. But the Irishman extended his right hand, and as he warmly shook Moses' hand, he said: "I did not understand much of your talk, but that which I did understand was good." And as he drew away his hand he allowed a gold dollar to rest in Moses' right palm. Thereafter, whenever Moses passed this particular hillside, he would pause and offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the victory the Lord had given him there.

### CHARACTER AND TRAITS OF DISSINGER

His was a most remarkable personality. Rev. Yost said of him, "He was a unique character, an extraordinary man, both in body and mind, gifted with tireless energy, an original, peculiar personage, the like of which our church has never had and never again will have in its ministry." He embodied in his character such singular eccentricities, such original and peculiar traits that it is wholly impossible for anyone, we believe, to make a clear satisfactory statement about a man like he was, that such a character as he possessed defies formal analysis, because some things in life must be perceived rather than expressed in order to communicate them. So in this topic we shall not attempt to analyze his character nor make an estimate of the works

and influence of his life, for such a life as he lived cannot be measured by any rules formulated by mere man. What we would do is only to discuss the characteristics and traits that Moses was endowed with, that permeated his whole being, and which manifested themselves in his every word and deed,—that so endeared him to all who knew him.

Only a few words of an outstanding physical trait; his great strength and unbounded nervous energy. Moses would himself say to his older children, that at times he felt that he was a head taller and possessed of unusual strength. He told them how, in his youth, he would climb to the top-most branches of trees, swing on them by his hands, then allow his body to drop through the air and catch hold of another limb beyond, just as one sees circus performers tossing their bodies from one trapeze to another. These unusual physical exertions and activities of his body and limbs, as a growing boy, undoubtedly gave him the strength, vigor and agility he was possessed of in later life; qualities he retained until to his last illness, for his habits of living were regular, cleanly and with no let up in doing exercise of some kind. That he was a natural born athlete is evidenced by his ability to easily vault over the back of a horse even at 50 years of age. Being far stronger than the average man, he delighted at times to show it; not in the way of a braggart, but in a natural feeling of elation in being able to lend a helping hand to some seemingly impossible task. He was prone to relate incidents of such a nature to his children, seated on his knee, and would chuckle at the recollection of these incidents,—for he never laughed aloud, only a low supressed laugh. We may relate here several such incidents that he told his children. He once came upon a laborer unsuccessfully trying to move a heavy log. Telling the man to seat himself upon it, Mose lifted both man and timber, moving it to the desired place. Then he related of a place in Penna., where the bully of the town was present at

church services and caused much disturbance while prayer was going on. So Moses took the fellow by the nape of the neck and seat of his trousers, yanked him down the aisle, and threw him bodily through the door with a tremendous heave, so that the fellow landed prone on the ground with an audible thud. With the usual chuckle, Moses then added how this same man had invited him to dine in his home several days after the affiair; which Moses did! Perhaps the chuckle was caused by the recollection of the fine dinner and the well done potatoes; for Moses was especially fond of that ground-fruit,—an outcropping of an Irish trait, mayhap?

He had a great sense of humor! never forced. Its originality made it irresistable and flowed naturally from his alert mind. He loved to tell a good story, and delighted in harmless little jokes. For instance, while holding one of his grandchildren on his knee, he would suddenly pull off his wig, and the surprise shown on the face of the little one would amuse him immensely. As a dispenser of cheer and gladness he was hard to excel, and in his inimitable phrasing of the Penna.-German dialect in uttering both words of a humerous or serious nature, he has never been even equalled. This indescribable gift no doubt grew out of his alertness of mind; and, we believe, it was this quality of a fine sense of humor that made it impossible for him to think of assuming the silly dignity and proud aloofness sometimes shown by men in public life who rise above the level of the common people. He always acted in a perfectly natural manner peculiar to his own individuality, and ever was a gentleman of the great middle classes. Though his humor was at times sarcastic and critical, as well as grotesque, when he thought that such was deserved, yet never was it coarse nor vulgar. His manners in this respect were beyond reproach, for though he was never proud nor "high-hatted" yet he was possessed of a very refined nature. To see him smile, to hear his words of cheer

made weary people laugh and forget their fatigue; made sad people smile and, for a time, forget their sorrows; made people who were straying from the fold to have a renewal and strengthening of faith; and made men holding different views forget them, for the moment, and listen attentively to his eloquence.

Even his voice and speech had the stamp of his marked individuality. His voice was not gruff, nor was it shrill; yet it was very penetrating and possessed great carrying power. Rev. John Wuerth, of Kansas, said that he once heard Moses pray with such power that he surely thought the walls of the church would collapse, for they seemed to tremble as from an earthquake. It is also related that in Lehigh County, Penna., in a campmeeting grove, Moses yelled so fearfully that the horses were frightened and had to be held and calmed by their owners. Then his enunciation was very clear and distinct; also decidedly rapid, when we consider that he always spoke German, which is a rather drawling tongue.

Rev. Yost says of his memory, to quote: "He was gifted with a marvelous memory. What he read and heard his memory retained, and he could use the knowledge acquired his own peculiar manner. What he learned from others was so mingled up with the product of his own mind that it seemed to come from its native mint."

A very marked characteristic Moses possessed was his sincerity of soul! He was always straight-forward and truly sincere. There was no shamming in his make-up, no hypocrisy nor false pretense of any kind. In his association with people, in his public career of 27 years, he always rang "true blue." He would never accept praises tendered him following a powerful sermon he had delivered, saying that thanks are due only to the Lord, for he only gives to the people what the Lord gives him. This makes it very manifest that Moses was true to himself, and so could not be false to man.

Finally, his sympathy was that of a big-minded, kind-hearted and tender-spirited Christian gentleman; whose heart could endure no cruelty, no sorrow, no slight. He held no grievances, no animosities, no bitterness in his simple and sincere soul; not even against those whom he had chastised when they caused disturbances in his church, for in many instances a warm friendship was culminated with those same individuals. He was ever ready to cheer and help the afflicted, always present to console a household overshadowed by a death. He yearned with a father's love for his congregation. By counsel and guidance, as well as with encouragement and help, given his fellow-men, his unselfish services are remembered by many people even today. Literally, he fulfilled the command to: "Rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep."

Though much more could here be said of his singular traits, we feel that in the following testimonials and recollections of men who knew Moses intimately, as also in the stories related throughout the volume, adequate provision is made for the reader to gather further peeps into his unique character.

### HE RECOGNIZED HIS ECCENTRICITIES

That Moses was quite aware of his eccentric ways and singular personality is quite evident, for he once said: "I cannot preach like my brethren. When a carpenter I used to hew close to the line, and so I must do in my preaching, whatever knots there are in the way. I once tried to preach like my brethren, but my experience was like that of little David when he thought he would like to fight the big-mouth blasphemer in Saul's armor. He soon found out that, if he were to fight in Saul's armor, instead of slaying the giant, he would cut off his own head. But with the weapon to which he was adapted, he knocked in the gable-end of the big sinner. Only with the weapons the

Lord has given me can I whip the devil, even if he comes upon me with stilts as big as a three story house."

For the following incident we are indebted to Rev. C. F. Erffmeyer, of Kansas, who heard the circumstances from the lips of Moses himself at the Annual Kansas Conference Session in 1880. At the annual sessions of the East Penna. Conference, it became quite general that Moses was appointed to preach one evening during the session. If there was more than one Evangelical church in the city where the conference was held, he was sent to that church, and sometimes also to a church of a sister denomination. Moses was always glad to preach whenever this honor was tendered him, and always a great number of the Conference members came to hear his stirring sermons. But after a number of years, Moses somehow felt, that a goodly number of his colleagues came more out of curiosity than for the good they might receive. So Moses objected a bit to these appointments, though he was always obedient to fulfill his charge when asked to do so. Finally, he arrived at a solution that he hoped would alter the view point of those who came only to witness this quaint style of rendition. On this evening there were present the usual large delegation of ministers. Before the services opened Moses had asked a brother minister to sit by his side on the Rostrum. Moses now opened the services by singing, and shortly thereafter came the time when Moses would give his oration. That time now arrived; Moses read his text; then looked over the assemblage, and told them in these words: "Liebe Brieder, des werd mei Text wann ich predige deet,–*Aber den ovet thun ich net predige.*"–("Dear brethren, this would be my text if I would preach, –but this evening I am not going to preach.")–Pausing a moment to allow the surprised listeners to grasp the full meaning of his straight-forward decision, he added in a confidential tone, yet loud enough for all to hear: "Brieder, het ihr in ihrem lebe schun ein Katz gesehen fur ein Mous-

loch hucke, un am worte fer des Meisle rous zu komme. Die Katz wor gesetz fer uf es Meisle jumpe,—aber es glee Meisle is net rous komme.—*Dir gemaunt mich grat an selle Katz.* Dir seid komme fer mich heere predige aber—*Den Obet Heert dir der Dissinger net Predige.*" ("Brethren, did you ever see a cat sit in front of a mouse-hole watching for the mouse to come out. The cat was ready to jump upon the mouse, but the little mouse did not come out. *You remind me of that cat.* You came here to hear me preach,—*but you will not hear Dissinger preach this evening.*")

Moses then turned to his colleague, sitting with him, and directed him to close the services. Then taking his seat on the rostrum Moses said not another word while his colleague conducted the final hymn and pronounced the benediction. Some of the ministers present that evening had their amusement the next day about the matter, teasing him. Moses also said, when relating the incident: "Several of those present that evening teased me about the matter the next day, but knew well enough why I didn't give a sermon that evening."

Moses soon became widely known as a most singular man. Everybody knew who was meant when merely the name "Mose" was mentioned. His eccentricities drew people in crowds to hear him, and his wonderful gift of oratory was so powerful that many felt he preached, "as one having authority and not as the scribes." Rev. Yost, his life long friend and early tutor, says this of Dissinger's early success as a preacher:—"He soon became known throughout the church as a very singular man, and everywhere people came in crowds to see this marvelous preacher. He hurled divine truth with the force of a Titan. He was as bold as a lion, and knew no fear. He would preach with such fluency, originality, and power that it was a marvel to all who heard him.

ROUGHNECKS MEET THEIR WATERLOO

The following incident, drawn from Stetzel, was but one of many occasions when Moses handled a difficult situation, not by sharp criticisms from his tongue, but by the use of his great strength and agility. At a camp meeting held near Catasauqua, in Lehigh Co., Penna., a crowd of drunken toughs appeared to break up the evening services. Like unruly savages they advanced through the dark forest to the camp grounds, driving the worshippers before them, when Moses leaped into the crowd of rowdies, calling out to his friends: "Stand your ground, brethren; don't retreat any farther." With almost lightning like quickness, he seized the leader of the gang, who the next instant hit the dust with a vengeance. A moment later Moses had seized another, and as he quickly disposed of him he again yelled: "Nemmt Brigel Brieder un geb ihne es!"—("Take clubs brethren and go for them!")—But his advice was wholly unnecessary for he had barely sent a third victim sprawling to the ground, when the crowd of toughs in breathless haste rushed back into the darkness whence they had come. An Allentown paper published a report of this campmeeting, stating that the Evangelical ministers had earnestly endeavored, by their preaching, to convert sinners, but there had also been one minister among them who wanted to convert them with clubs. "Des war gewiss der Mose."—("That was surely Mose."), was the decision of those who knew of the eccentric Dissinger.

Again at a prayer meeting held in a church, Moses was warned that at the close of the services, a gang of "hard fellows" would be waiting for him outside the door to thrash him. After Moses had closed the services, he coolly walked to the door to see the toughs lined up and waiting as they had promised. Turning to a few of his brethren he called, "Hend Feste Brueder." He then led the way out of doors and stepped up to the rowdies with several of his brethren bringing up the rear. Then as Moses began to

calmly pull up his sleeves he said to them: "Do you want to fight, boys?"—They looked at Moses tensed and ready poised with gleaming eyes; then questioningly they gazed at each other. None had the courage to begin hostilities.

### A GLORIOUS CAMPMEETING IN AUGUST 1875

One of the most successful campmeetings ever held, probably within the bounds of the East Penna. Conference, was held at Bingen, Northampton County, Penna., in the Pleasant Valley Circuit. From the first service to the last the presence of the Holy Spirit was realized in a most extraordinary manner. A large number of sinners were converted, and scores entered into the experience of perfect love. There was the most perfect union among the preachers and people, so that it could be truthfully said, they were of one mind and one soul. The hungering and thirsting after righteousness seemed intense and general. A most extraordinary consecration-meeting was held on Saturday morning, lasting nearly three hours, during which the power of God was realized in a most signal manner. Hundreds were upon their knees renewing their vows to God, and making an eternal covenant with the Lord.—On the Sabbath it was estimated that the meeting was attended by at least ten thousand people. Ten sermons were preached during the day, as the multitudes were addressed at two different places aside from the regular preaching stand. The most perfect order was maintained from the beginning of the meeting to the end. The influence of the Spirit was so powerful that every one seemed to realize that he was standing on holy ground.

Rev. Moses Dissinger was the Preacher-in-charge * of the Circuit at that time. He rendered most valuable service at this meeting, preaching several sermons of unusual power. At the last service he was appointed to make the

* A Preacher-in-charge was the regular pastor of a Circuit that consisted more than one congregation; and he had assistants under him to help cover the large field.

closing address. Speaking to the unconverted in his inimitable, peculiar manner, he said:

"Ihr liebe Leut, ihr sagt wir verdammen euch. O, wie seid ihr doch betrogen. Wenn ich an der hoelle staende und es fiel Jemand von ouch hinein, und ich koennt ihn noch en den Hohr verwische, ich thaet ihn schnell 'rausziege and thaet ihn ausblose, und ging schnell mit em nasse Haus-lumpa um ihn her, ums Feuer zu loesche. Nine, wir moechten euch retten und selig sehen. Desshalb zeigen wir euch euren verloronen Zustand und rufen aus mit lauter Stimme: *Siehe das Lemm Gottes, welches der Welt Suende trug.*"—("Ye dear people. Ye say that we condemn you, but oh, how you are deceived. Why, if I stood at the verge of hell and one of you were to fall into it and I could yet grasp him at his hair, I would pull him out quickly, and would blow him out, and would quickly put the wet house-rag around him to put out the fire. No, we want to rescue you and have you saved, for this reason we show you your lost condition and call upon you with a loud voice: *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the World.*")

This exhortation had a most wonderful effect. It seemed to thrill the audience like a shock of electricity. Only Eternity will reveal the grand and blessed results of this extraordinary campmeeting.—(This topic was taken in its entirety from: "History of the Evangelical Association," Pp. 207, 208).

### DRAMATIZATION OF SERMONS

Rev. Dissinger was at times very dramatic in his rendition of a sermon. It was a natural gesture of his quaint character, and not a studied or premeditated theatrical performance. On these occasions he delivered his most powerful and telling auditions that had an electrical effect upon the congregation. They were almost altogether free of his innate wit and humor, and were pronounced in a

most solemn and tender cord. "After preaching one of these powerful sermons, he would appear very tender, quiet and subdued; and might be found seated in some corner, weeping;—weeping, as only a strong man can do."

Shortly before his last illness, in a sermon on the Redeemed Multitude (mentioned in Revelation Chapter 7), he became quite dramatic. Kneeling over the pulpit steps, he illustrated how the redeemed would dip water out of the stream of heavenly life; and when he uttered these words, "and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," —he stepped off the pulpit and drawing forth his handkerchief, he wiped the flowing tears from the face of an aged man. This gesture made an overwhelming impression upon the congregation, who sat spell-bound, their moist eyes riveted upon the solemn dramatics so unconsciously played by their minister.

On another occasion, Moses preached to a vast throng at a campmeeting. His theme was the Translation of Elijah, this being one of his favorite texts. In this sermon he gave a very vivid description of the heavenly chariot with its fiery steeds sweeping down to earth from the Heavens. Just as the chariot reached the earth, Moses, in imitating the prophet, stepped forward toward the chariot. At this very instant he removed his coat, and, like a flash, tossed it about his shoulders as one would a cloak. This being significant of the mantle of the prophet, Elijah. Then stepping into the imaginary chariot, with his face directed toward heaven, and with a burst of sunlight suffusing his sober features, he repeated solemnly the lines of a German hymn, beginning with the words, "Von fern glaenzt mir mein Kleinod zu."—("From afar shines my salvation upon me.")—The people sprang to their feet, and rushed forward over the benches to kneel at the altar as if drawn by a mighty irresistable whirlpool.

### AT THE PHILADELPHIA GENERAL CONFERENCE

Twice at least, Rev. Dissinger preached at a General Conference of the Evangelical Church. These conferences are held every four years when ministers and delegates from all over the nation gather in session at a specified place; it is a Conference of the whole church, we might say. At the General Conference held in Philadelphia, we have but the initial sentence with which Moses began his sermon there. After reading his text, he began his oration with these words: "Liebe Brieder, ich weiss nicht wie es mir gehen wird diesen abend,—aber dass kann ich sage. Es ist mir noch immer gegangen,—entweder hinnerschich oder farschlich."—("Dear brethren, I do not know how I'll get along this evening, but I can at least say this,—I have always somehow gotten along,—either backward or forward.")

### AT THE NAPERVILLE GENERAL CONFERENCE

At the General Conference of his denomination held in Naperville, Illinois, in October 1871, Moses, to quote: 'profoundly moved and impressed the vast congregation'-, with his sermon we are so fortunate to enter in its entirety following this topic.* Rev. William Nast, of the Methodist church, who was present in the interest of a union of the churches, was greatly impressed. He "followed with rapt attention, as Moses preached the Word with the unction of the Spirit. The great theologian and editor for many years of 'Der Christliche Apologete' was overcome when Dissinger had finished his sermon, and asked for the privilege of speaking with him! Rev. Nast said afterward, 'It appeared to me that one of the prophets of old was standing before us, proclaiming the divine oracles of God to men,—as one having divine authority. Never have I heard its equal! I thank God for this messenger and for his mes-

* A sermon, written by Mose was at one time in the hand of the Rev. S. Neitz Dissinger. Evidently James Dissinger intended to include it in its entirety in this sketch of Mose.

sage.' " One of the ministers present made this comment of the impression the distinguished Rev. Nast felt, "Yes, when Dissinger had finished his sermon, the great Dr. Nast was, literally speaking, at his feet."

### AT THE KANSAS CONFERENCE SESSION—1880

The following reminiscence is from the pen of Rev. C. F. Erffmeyer, of Holton, Kansas, who was in attendance at this conference session and heard Rev. Dissinger; and, we quote: "At that Conference session at Cosby, Missouri, he (Moses) was called upon to pray during the opening of the Conference. We had a wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Rev. Dissinger was in the spirit in his prayer. This is one of the petitions he made: 'O, heavenly Father, Thou art rich in mercy; we are so poor, so needy, worms of the dust. We are opening this annual conference session; Thy table is loaded with the things we need. We pray Thee, take the four corners of the table cloth and just empty it all out upon us.'—There came a wonderful power upon the brethren,—a melting time! Forget it?—*No!* I think it will go with me to the end!"

### HOME LIFE

Another outstanding home characteristic that Moses possessed was his neatness, cleanliness, and methodicalness. The desk where he studied and outlined his sermons had to be kept free of the least particle of dust, with all books and papers carefully and neatly arranged. Though he dressed plainly, his clothes were always clean and well pressed, and he was especially particular to have his shoes neat and glossy. Then also his health habits were beyond reproach; they were decidedly regular, so that in conjunction with the daily exercise involved in caring for his vegetable garden, as well as frequent tramps and horseback riding into the country, he was rarely ever ill, and then not so as to be indisposed. His meals were always of the

plainest food, and he was especially fond of potatoes and vegetables. He was decidedly opposed to any form of alcoholic beverage and used absolutely none. And not only did he practice neatness in his home, but to quote his son: "My father usually kept a horse, unless stationed in the city, and would keep his horses sleek, fat and well curried, with the stable as clean and neat as a kitchen; as also buggy, sulky and saddle." We might add here that Moses was always a lover of thorough-bred horses; and that he enjoyed fast driving and riding. And as this last was one of his hobbies, another was his love to work in his vegetable garden, especially caring for the potatoes and the celery bed, keeping it always free of weeds and in perfect order.

Rev. Dissinger's wife, Amelia E. (nee, Stahler), was a great help to him in his ministry. She was always his stay and comfort. Moses would at times feel downhearted if he thought one of his sermons had not carried home to his congregation as it should have done, or as he wished it to do; but his adored wife's words of cheer would soon dispel his gloom. She was well educated, an exceptionally good singer and had a fine aptitude to prayer, so that Rev. Dissinger was always eager to have her present at his revival meetings. Theirs was a life of love, of perfect understanding, and tranquil peace. Returning from ministerial calls, Moses, when entering his home, would always first inquire of children, in words: "Whoo ist die Mamm?"—("Where is mother?") She could always tell when her husband would preach a sermon of unusual power by the deep study and prayerful preparations he made. A loving wife, a kind mother, a willing helpmate, an understanding teacher and a tender nurse, Rev. E. Brandt gives this tribute to Mrs. Dissinger: "Sie war ihm eine aus gezeichnete Gehuelfin; ja, eine Muster-Predigersfrau."—("She was to her husband an excellent consort; Yes, a model preacher's wife.") She survived her beloved husband almost twelve years, and

passed away peacefully in her home while partaking of supper, shortly after she had asked the Lord's blessing. Her funeral text, which she herself had wished, was: Psalm, 116:7—"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!"

FAMILY AND DESCENDANTS OF REV. DISSINGER

Rev. Moses Dissinger was twice married and had issue with both unions. He married first, Susan *Clark,* a daughter of Abraham and Margaret (Gass) *Clark,* born February 2, 1831, in Schaefferstown, Lebanon, Co., Pa., died on February 14, 1857, aged 26 years, and her remains lie in the Evangelical cemetery in the above said town of her birth. To this union were born three children, to wit:

I: *Frank Clark Dissinger,* born December 17, 1851, at Kleinfeltersville, Lebanon Co., Penna.; died May 25, 1884, aged 33 years, near Eudora, Douglas Co., Kansas, and is interred near his father's grave in the Clearfield cemetery several miles south of the last said town. He was survived by a wife, Marietta (née, Koons), a native of Slatington, Penna. and who, at this writing, resides in Allentown, Penna. He also left to mourn his early departure two children, then of tender age, namely: (1) Charles, who lives in Allentown, Penna.; and (2) Mamie, who married Charles Neast and resides in Mauch Chunk, Penna. Another child, Stella, who died aged two years, had gone before her father. Prior to moving West with his father in 1878, Frank C. was a painter by trade, but was in the above said year established on a farm located five miles from Eudora, Kansas, where he spent the last years of his life in the agricultural occupations.

II: *Abraham Henry Dissinger,* born October 15, 1853, in Schaefferstown, Penna.; died January 28, 1931, aged 77 years, in Kansas City, Missouri. He was married to Ella Oberholtzer, a native of Lockport, Penna.; she died in 1919. They had issue of twelve children, seven of whom

survive today, to wit: (1) Edward, born 1876, resides in Kansas City, Mo., where he is engaged in the Sheet Metal Business; (2) Herbert, born 1880, is a farmer residing near Orzawkie, Kansas; (3) David, born 1883; is a farmer residing near Linwood, Kansas; (4) Helen, born 1884, is single and employed as a clerk in a Kansas City Dep't Store; (5) Raymond, born 1885, is a farmer and resides near Linwood, Kansas; (6) John, born 1886, resides in Kansas City, Kansas, and is a car inspector on the Rock Island Railroad; (7) Laura, born 1890, married Earl F. Price, and resides in Lawrence, Kansas. Charles, Frederick, Mamie, Irene and Florence died in childhood. Until to the year 1879, when he moved to Kansas with his father, Abraham was in the hardware business at Slatington, Penna.; but until within a few years, when he retired on a competence, he was a farmer residing near Belleview, a town not far from Eudora, in Kansas.

III: *Elizabeth Dissinger,* born July 7, 1856; died March 7, 1857, and is interred adjacent to her mother's grave in Schaefferstown, Penna.

Rev. Moses was married secondly to Amelia Elizabeth Stahler, born May 12, 1831, in Fogelsville, Lehigh Co., Penna.; died July 19, 1894, aged 63 years, at Deer Creek, Douglas Co., Kansas. She was a daughter of Christian and Elizabeth (Becker) Stahler; and on the maternal side she was a granddaughter of Dr. Becker, a Hessian Army Surgeon, who came to America during the period of the War for Independence, 1775-'83; married a Moravian lady, Miss van Dalian, and settled in Lehigh County, Penna. We have already spoken of the fine qualities possessed by this lady, and will here give place to her children. A family of ten children were born to Rev. Moses and his wife, Amelia, five of whom today survive, to wit:

IV: *Charles Wesley Dissinger,* born November 18, 1858, in Schuylkill Co., Penna.; died aged one year.

V. *Allen Jacob Dissinger,* born March 22, 1860, at South Whitehall, Lehigh Co., Penna.; died aged one year.

VI. *Clara Jane Dissinger,* born September 17, 1861, in above said place; died in 1869, aged 8 years, at Lehighton, Carbon, Co., Penna.; and was interred at Weissport, in the same county.

VII. *Anna Louisa Dissinger,* born April 30, 1863, in Millersville, Lancaster Co., Penna. She married Jacob Nuffer, a native of Beaver Falls, Lewis Co., New York. They reside in El Centro, California, where Mr. Nuffer is engaged in the Real Estate Business. They have issue of five children, namely: (1) Herbert Moses Nuffer, born 1883, and resides in Seattle, Washington; (2) Allen P., born 1884, and is associated with his father in the real estate business; (3) Elma C., born 1891, married Elmer Wallace, and resides near Augusta, Kansas; (4) Cora A., born 1894, married James Maxwell, and resides in El Centro, California; and (5) Leslie L., born 1898, and is an attorney practicing in El Centro, California.

VIII. *Alice Amelia Dissinger,* born December 24, 1864, in Millersville, Penna.; died in 1870, aged 6 years, at Lehighton, Penna., and is interred in Weissport, Carbon Co., Penna.

IX. *Laura Sophia Dissinger,* born September 3, 1866, at Philadelphia, Penna.; she married Allen Anderson who is today a retired Dry Goods Merchant, and resides with his wife and only child, Amelia E., born 1909, in the city of Long Beach, State of California.

X. *Rae Dissinger,* born December 4, 1868, at Allentown, Penna.; she married first, Elmer Hamm (deceased), who in his lifetime had conducted a furniture store in Joplin, Missouri. Rae was later married to John Swicegood, a native of the last said town, and whose demise took place in a recent year. There were no heirs with either union. Rae now resides with her sister, Laura, in Long Beach, California.

XI. *Rev. Frederick Charles Dissinger,* born January 21, 1871, in Lehighton, Carbon Co., Penna. At the age of eight years he accompanied his parents to Kansas, where upon reaching manhood he followed in the footsteps of his distinguished father, and entered the ministry of the Evangelical church. His first charge, at the age of 22, was in the Texas Conference, in the year 1893. Since then he served very successfully in various circuits in Kansas, Colorado, California, and Missouri. He served as a Presiding Elder for a term of four years, and spent two years in evangelistic work. At this writing he resided at Clarksdale, Missouri, to which station he was appointed in the spring of 1930. With his wife, Rose (née, Nuffer) there was issue of two children, viz: (1) Ruth, born 1897; she is married to Dr. Carl Althaus, of the teaching staff of the Kansas State University, at Lawrence, Kansas, where they reside. Before her marriage, Ruth had taught in the public schools for five years, and is a graduate of North Central College in Illinois; (2) Clarence, born 1899, a graduate of the above said college, and also attended Columbia University in New York City. He has entered the teaching profession, specializing in Music Supervision, and was thus engaged in the schools of La Grange, Illinois, in 1930. Frederick Charles Dissinger died January 7, 1952, Lawrence, Kansas; had spent his last years with his daughter Mrs. Althaus.

XII. *Robert Edward Dissinger,* born September 5, 1873, at Fleetwood, Berks Co., Penna.; in 1895 he was married to Ella E. Tobias, a native of Kansas City, Mo., and to this union was born an only child: Gladys A., born 1896, and is the wife of Floyd M. Livengood and they reside in Kansas City, Kansas. Robert E. and wife reside at West Palm Beach, Florida, where he is engaged as a truck-farmer. Robert Edward Dissinger died November, 1933.

XIII. *Elmer Dissinger,* born 1874 at Spring City, Penna., died in infancy and is there interred.

## THE HOLBEN STORIES

HE WAS EARNEST, PLUCKY
AND FULL OF VIM AND FULL OF FIGHT
BUT WHEN HE ATTACKED SATAN
HE LEARNED THAT HE HAD A TOUGH PROPOSITION ON HAND
AND THAT HE HAD TO KEEP HIS COAT OFF
ALL THE YEAR ROUND

It used to be the custom of the ministers of the Evangelical Conference to make verbal reports as to what they had done and accomplished during the previous year. This was changed by resolution, requiring each member to furnish a written report. At the next conference each one, as his name was called, complied with the resolution, except Reverend Dissinger, who was a self-made man, full of faith and religious enthusiasm, and who devoted all his time and energies to making saints out of sinners. He was no temporizer, and wore but one collar, and that was his own, and never sugared over the devil. His shibboleth was to destroy Satan and to annihilate the infernal regions. When his name was called, he said: "I have no written report, but I can tell you in five minutes as to what I did during the past year: I baptized twenty children, married ten couples, buried nine persons, I held many revival meetings, attended two camp meetings and preached over a hundred sermons. In short, I labored hard in the Lord's vineyard and tried my utmost to kill the devil and to knock in the gable end of hell."

* * *

*The anecdotes with headings are taken verbatim from Evan Holben's *Stories and Reminiscences*, a small booklet published in 1902; the other stories are taken verbatim from the Holben collection of unpublished stories which was to form a second volume of his reminiscences. They are in the possession of Reverend Thomas R. Brendle. The Holben stories are quite authentic. Holben was a noted attorney of Allentown, Pennsylvania.

### HE KNEW THAT SOME OF HIS CONVERTS WERE QUEER FISH AND NOT WORTH ANGLING FOR

Reverend Dissinger was a good judge of human cussedness to which humanity is heir. He was no sycophant and believed in the doctrine that all obsequious flatterers were damned beyond redemption. The circumstances and environment had been against him in his younger days in getting an education, yet he was no amateur in religious matters, and was high up on man's original and present transgressions and never bowed to the Baal of lusts and trusts. He and exhorter Krause had been co-laborers in the Evangelical church for many years in the same city. Dissinger having been assigned to a new field, they became separated and did not meet each other for a long time. His new charge was composed of the rough and tumble class and were as much alike as one egg is to another. When they met again, and after having exchanged the customary civilities of the day, the interview was about as follows:

*Krause*: "Brother Dissinger, how is your church doing?"
*Dissinger:* "Very well, considering all things."
*Krause:* "Is your church increasing and prosperous?"
*Dissinger:* "It is, thank the Lord."
*Krause:* "Any new converts?"
*Dissinger:* "Oh Yes, quite many."
*Krause:* "Are they people of means and good standing?"
*Dissinger:* "Well, brother Krause, I will tell you, they are so so, I don't believe there is an angel in heaven, that would give five cents for a pair of them."

* * *

### THE THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS' FUN DID NOT MATERIALIZE

Reverend Dissinger had a confirmed prejudice against college-bred ministers, due to the fact that divers of the cloth had criticised him for using rude and inelegant language. One evening a half dozen theological students at-

tended his church with a view of having a little amusement, but of this he was unconscious.

By sheer co-incidence he preached on his favorite theme: "True Preachers and True Christians." He referred to college-bred ministers in uncomplimentary and sarcastic terms; he ridiculed and burlesqued them nigh unto death in his native vernacular. He talked about characterless and disreputable young men who would rather be in style than out of debt, not having Christianity enough in their heads to cover the point of a needle, entering the front door of a college and coming out at the rear end with a "Schaaf Haut," full-fledged ministers of God, Christ and the Holy Ghost, and then adding: "They are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. In a thousand pounds of learning they have not an ounce of religion, and when they preach, the devil goes to sleep right in front of the pulpit and right under his eyes and noses, well knowing that his cause is perfectly safe in their hands."

The students, thinking that his remarks were aimed at them, got up and left in the middle of the sermon. He comprehended the situation and as they walked out, he exclaimed. "Some have felt the cheese-knife; this is the way it goes in this world; there they go! when the teakettle boils over, then the cats and dogs get out from under the stove."

* * *

ON DOT

Rev. Moses Dissinger was a genuine optimist, although very emphatic at all times and in all things. One day whilst in the midst of his peroration of an eloquent sermon the old pulpit against the wall gave way. At first his flock didn't know what had become of their good flock master, but he soon emerged from the debris without the loss of a button and ejaculated: "Meine lieben Leute, Gott sei Dank, dass es nicht in die Hölle gegangen ist."

* * *

Rev. Moses Dissinger was always original. He was not himself when he was not original. He was a religious volcano continually in activity. When he was in the pulpit he was like the good rider, safe in the saddle and secure in the stirrup. In one of his spirited sermons he concluded by saying: "Be thankful unto the Lord and bless His name, always be thankful for good health; unthankfulness is ungratefulness. Be thankful for good luck and the good things on the table. I know people who will stuff themselves full up to the gizzard and never thank the Lord. I can think of no meaner being than an old hog which goes into the woods and eats acorns until she is full and then walks off without even looking where the acorns come from."

* * *

Rev. Moses Dissinger after he had assumed charge of a new field of labor found that some of the sisters of the congregation were minded to have their own way. He was never dismayed by a serpent in the way or an adder in the path; he was a pilgrim steadfast in the storm. He preached a special sermon on the rights and duties of a pastor and the reciprocal obligations of the flock. Among other things he said: "Ich bin die spitze der Kirche and Ihr muesst meinen Vorschlagen gerhorchen. Wenn Ihr einen Pfarrer haben vollt den ihr rum kneten koennten dann macht Euch lieber einen vun Teig."

* * *

Reverend Moses Dissinger knew that when he attacked Satan he had a tough proposition on hand and had to have his coat off through the year. He never held out the olive branch to Satan and his imps. With him it was either Heaven or Hell—no halfway houses between the two places.

* * *

Reverend Moses Dissinger was always full of energy and able to inspire enthusiasm. He believed in the assertion of

the poet. "An idler is a watch that wants both hands. As useless if it goes as when it stands." One evening when it was rainy, he entered church a little late and everything seemed to be gloomy and at a standstill. The singers had just finished a hymn. He pulled off his overcoat and then sat down and took a view of things for a few moments and then got up and said: "Brieder, reis noch einmal eins ab. Sing das Lied, 'Sie heissen uns die lauten Leit, Aber im Himmel wird es noch louder sein.' " This inspired the whole congregation and they sang with great vigor making the windows quiver and the slate on the roof rattle.

* * *

Reverend Moses Dissinger was never lacking in convictions and when he had something to say he said it regardless of consequences. One day he preached one of his vigorous sermons and said among other things, "If some people would struggle half as hard to get into heaven as they do to get into fashionable society they would be sure of salvation."

His salary was due. He did not go about it in a round about way to make the fact known. He said "I need the money but still I can get along without it. I always turn my face to the sunshine then I know that the shadows will always fall behind me. I am satisfied with my lot knowing that the good Lord never forgets his Mose."

* * *

REVEREND DISSINGER PAYS HIS RESPECTS TO TWO OF HIS CLOTH

He never ignored facts nor lied about them.

Reverend B., a Lutheran minister and a publisher of children's papers and German almanacs, and Reverend A., a Baptist minister, had criticized him about this, which was perfectly natural, for it is not the tree casting the longest shadow that is dubbed and stoned the most but the one that has the finest nuts or the most luscious fruit on it. He made many a scornful dog eat dirty pudding; there was

always savor and flavor in his denunciations. He had no regard for formal and lifeless preachers and of course his sermons were never so polished as to be pointless. One evening after he was tuned up he relieved himself in this wise: "I have been and am slandered by my own kith and kin. When I preached at Cedarville there was a red devil that persecuted me saying that I had been a clown in a New Jersey circus. I have shaken him off and when I came here I had thought that I was rid of all persecutors. But, Oh No! For the first thing I knew, a certain minister in this city commenced to hound me, you know who he is, he is an almanac maker and prints a children's paper. Well I downed him and I expected that I would have rest but, No! The next thing I knew this water dog down here (meaning the Baptist minister) is after me. But so it goes in this wicked world. If you get rid of one devil you will have two new ones in his place. "Great fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite them, and little fleas have lesser fleas so ad infinitum!"

* * *

### HE GAVE THE BOYS TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEIR BAGGAGE WAS NOT CHECKED THROUGH TO HEAVEN

Reverend Moses Dissinger was invited to preach to a Volunteer Fire Company. He complied. He never got a stiff neck by looking up to transgressors. He didn't mince sin and modify damnation with a phrase; he preached a scarifying sermon and after he had told them what was in store for them if they did not reform, he concluded by saying: "My dear hearers, the Lord is ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness but unless you change your course of life and reform you will get to a place where there is fire that you cannot extinguish, but nevertheless with all your faults the devil shall not have a single one of you if I can help it."

A FLING AT A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER BY ONE WHO DIDN'T BELIEVE THAT HELL WAS PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS

He was rich and acted more like a rural representative than a heavenly pilot. He had made some disparaging remarks concerning Reverend Moses Dissinger believing as he did that telling the truth in too plain a manner was apt to cause trouble. One day he was walking along the street, and Reverend Dissinger whose heart was inspired and not easily daunted and who was not afraid of anything and never dallied with ifs, buts, whys and wherefores, seeing him asked a lady, "Who is that gentleman going there?" When told that it was Reverend W. the Presbyterian minister, he took an X-Ray view of him and then said, "Ich denk der macht dem Teufel seine Geiel nicht fiel schei [I guess he doesn't scare the devil's horses much]," by which he meant that in his opinion the prince of darkness was not alarmed by his preaching the Gospel.

Reverend Moses Dissinger was always original: in fact he was not himself unless he was original. He was generally the chief factor at a camp meeting and never failed to utter piercing eloquence. At one of these gatherings after he had read his text twice, he rolled up the sleeves of his alpaca coat and said, "My dear sisters and beloved brethern: this is a hard text but I am the man to handle it" and then proceeded to demonstrate the truth of his assertion and fully convinced his hearers that the devil is fully as black as he is painted and that a man with a frozen conscience and a hot burning will cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

* * *

Reverend Moses Dissinger always told the plain truth which is the most exasperating thing in all creation. He was one of those ministers who believed in the declaration of St. Paul. "Things without life giving sound whether pipe or harp except they give a distinction of sound how

shall it be known what is piped or harped." While preaching to a mixed audience among whom were a lot of unseasoned young men—speckled rowdies—on wailing and gnashing of teeth and the damnation of the wicked, a half dozen of the young, defiant of decency, who had no regard for the words, "My son hear the instructions of thy father and forsake not the law of the mother," demeaned themselves badly, he said. "Please give me your undivided attention for a few minutes and I will tell you the direct road to hell," they got up and started for the door. He continued, saying, "I see you know the route already, when you come home tell your mothers who gave you suck when you were babies, that when I proposed to tell you the route to hell I learned that it was not necessary because you knew it already. Proceed my young knickknackers you are going in the right direction." The boys were fully convinced that the parson was champion at stone throwing.

* * *

Reverend Dissinger was extreme in his temperance views after he had joined the church. He delighted to rail against liquor and drunkards and in exposing vice in its pure native ugliness. One day he said amongst other things: "When these men get to a place where there is rum they smell it and get it money or no money. You can always recognize a rum drinker; he has ears like pancakes and a nose as red as a turkey gobbler in the spring season. In the morning he looks as though the devil had pulled him through a hedge fence backwards.

"He becomes bemuddled and deluded. I know a man with a family who came home one evening filled with this Babylonian juice to such an extent that he did not know his head from a spinning wheel. It was a cold rainy evening. His wife had placed a half dozen goslings in a basket covered them with a paper and set them by the stove to warm. He sat at the stove and after he got warm his innards became rebellious and he vomited into the

basket. When he saw the goslings he became frightened, thinking he had vomited them. He called his wife and exclaimed, "Mary come here, just see what I have vomited."

This proves the truth of the Dutch proverb.

Wen de wyn is in den man
Is de wysheid in den Kan.

* * *

The wife of a poor man died and the minister of his church was off on his vacation, so Reverend Dissinger was engaged to officiate at the obsequies. He preached a rattling sermon. He gave his hearers a good sprinkling of hot water. He had contracted a habit of making the top and bottom, front and rear of his discourses of whips and scorpions, wrath and vengeance, fire and brimstone. When he had something to say he said it. No one could strangle his remarks. He never tried to march under two banners. He had no regard for nondescript mongrels in religion or politics. The burden of his song was "We have erred and strayed from the way like lost sheep."

When he was ready to pronounce the benediction, Mr. B. who was rich and very liberal but woefully lacking in religious belief, proposed to hold a collection to pay the pastor for his services. As a starter he contributed five dollars. Quite a large sum was collected. He refused to accept the money by saying "Give it to the poor husband; he has need of it for he has his house full of children and no wife. My wife is still living. I consider myself well compensated by the opportunity you afforded me to tell you the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

* * *

"Deliver me from my friends" was the slogan of Reverend Moses Dissinger showing that he had faith in his ability to take care of his enemies. Meeting a bunch of corner loafers, one of whom asked him, "How is the devil

this morning?" he responded without hesitation by saying, "I cannot tell, you must keep your own family record."

* * *

Reverend Moses Dissinger was asked to bury a poor woman who had wasted much of her time on the King's Highway. He served and the unexpected happened. Instead of re-hearsing her sins, he pitched into the living whose curiosity wanted to be satisfied. He knew that if all lived in glass houses there would be less stone throwing, less gossiping, and less lying. He told his virtuous hearers that on the highway of life it is much easier to go from bad to worse than from good to better and that in the menu of life all are apt to get into the soup and that the still small voice was getting smaller all the time. His text was: "He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her—and they which heard it being convicted of their own conscience went out one by one beginning at the eldest even into the Last."

What made his remarks aggravating was the fact that he harped so severely on the concluding passage. He sent shivers scurrying up and down their backs. He told them that the gates of hell were open day and night, that those swimming in their wine would drown in sorrow, and that the decent was smooth and easy and that they had to reform and be regenerated if they desired to keep out of Satan's waffle kitchen.

## DER "MOSE" DISSINGER*

Die ledshd woch wor ich bei'm guda alta freind uf a shtore box kockt in Schnecksville. Mer hen yaders en gross sockmesser kot un mer hen g'schnitzelt un fon da alta tzeita g'schwetzt. No hot my freund g'sawt—"Waisht noch wie der alt Mose Dissinger im John Hess sei'm karriage facktry ga'bredicht hot in da sixties?" Ich denk ich du's noch

*From "Obediah Grouthowel," *Allentown Morning Call*, date unknown.

wissa—ich hab ihn monich mol hoera bredicha. Em Hess sie karriage facktry is es same gabei os now em 'Squire Gross sei wertzhous is wo der Mr. Brong sei guda hinkle un waffla suppers gebt. Wo der drink bar now shtayt war als em parra Dissinger sei konsel. Die konsel war en shtore box, ow'r die hot net fon halb tzoll schtuft gamacht sei darfa; won sie net gud un shtarick gamacht war don hot er sie fer schtampt de airsht owet.

Der "Mose," wie yaders ihn gakent hot, war en wunnerbawrer karackter. Er hot sei aignie dikshonary kot un wer net reddy war for alla orta ousdrica tzu hoehra is besser net in sei meetings.

Der Mose Dissinger war gabora in 1824, in Schaefferstown, Lebanon Kounty, Pa. Eb er sich bakoert hot war er garechelt der "bully" fon seiner nochbershaft. Er war en "prize fighter" so wie der "Billy" Sunday en balla shpiela war. Der Mose hot 17 battles g'fochta eb er 18 yohr alt war un er hot die battles all gawunna. Er hot sei foll share wilder how'r g'saht bis er 18 yohr alt war.

About sellie tzeit is die Evangalish Gamashaft ordlich ei garissa in Lebanon kounty. Sie sin sellie tzeit "Shtraweler" kasa werra. In ains fon ihra meetings is er hard ga'droffa werra un der "Mose" is was mer haist "bus-fertich" werra. Bis do har war er net bong for niemond ow'r now war er bong der dei'wl dade ihn hohla. Er hot aw fonga bada un hot aw net uf gevva bis er "gnawda" erlonkt hot kot. Er hot helfa en keller ous grawwa un mit yader shibfol grund os er rous g'schmissa hot hot er ga'bad. "Oh, Gott, geb mer gnawda." Er is ow'r endlish "darrich kumma" wie mer heit noch sawgt. No wie er bakoert war hot er sich for ganumma os er fon now aw der deiwl fecht. Er will now en porra gewwa un die Bie'wl bredicha mit all gawalt. Ow'r er war ains fon denna boowa was immer "hookey" g'shpielt hot kotta in seina shule dawga un now hot er g'funna os er net lasa un net schreiwa kon. Anglish tzu bredicha war ous der froke wile er war en dummer Penn-

sylvanish deutscher. Sei freund hen ihm gud mit kolfa un es war net long bis er die deutsch Bie'wl lasa hot kenna. Sei gadechtniss war so gud os er sie aw yusht a mol lasa hot braucha no hot er sie ouswenich gakent. Schreiva hot er net gabroucht wile er hot sei bredicha net ob g'schrivva—er hot ous der fausht gebredicht un er selver hot net gawist wie's rous komt; ich kon mich errinera os die luft oftmols foll schwev'l garuch war bis er ferdich war. Er hot's besht gadechtniss kot os ich in mei'm lava fon der konsel 'koehrt hab; er hot sei lehr bashtadicht mit so hoch os 100 Bie'wl shprich in ainera bredich un er hot immer g'sawt wo sie g'shrivva shtayn.

Well es hot en "Shtraweler's" porra ous ihm gewwa un in seina bredicha hot er aw net uf gewwa bis etlicha fon da breder udder shwestera "ga'shtraweld" hen—no hot er gawist os Gott sei warik g'sagent hot. On kampmeeting un longa fersomling war er der "star" bredicher; die leit sin meila weit kumma won sie gawist hen os der "Mose" Dissinger bredicht. Er war hase-bluthich un im winter wie in summer hot er gons dinna glader aw kot, oftmols hot er ken koller aw kot, un won er ainer gawohra hot war er en tzoll braid, un sei "tie" war yusht so en halb tzoll braider schwartzer bendle. Er hot ga'grisha un is ga'-chumpt os er g'schwitzt is un der floor fon seiner konsel hot gud un shtarrick gamacht si missa udder er hot sie nunner gabrocha. Er hot gaga die sauferei gabredicht ow'r hot nie nix tzu sawga kot gaga's duwack chawa fon waga er hot selver ga'chawt. Ich hin net gons shure, ow'r ich mane er het aw segars g'shmokt.

Er hot oftmols plain rous g'schwetzt fon der konsel won leit sich net badrawga hen in der kerch wie's krishtlich un recht war. In Millershteddle (Macungie) hen mol en halb dutzend yunga shliffle sei meeting fershtoehra wolla. Er hot yusht g'shtoppt in seiner bredich un hot sie ob ga-dresst: "Horcht ihr yunga dort hinner, ihr sin all hund except die hout; ihr braucha yusht en hund's hout uf

euch howwa no kent en yaders sahna wos ihr sin; ich hab net gawist os Miller-shteddle so ungabutzte Gaderaner hot os so foll dei'wl sin os wie ihr sin; now misst ihr ruich si udder ich kum dort nunner un schmeis ainer um der onner nous os yaders der halz ferbrecht; my nahma is Dissinger un won ihr's net glawwa don bleibt yusht outside shta won die kerch ous is; so wie ihr sin kon ich gud en halb dutzent uf a mol lettera. Un ihr guda leit was kumma sin for Gott tzu diena will ich en roth gewwa, heiert kenner g'shperrt, fon waga won die dei'wl ous denna Gaderaner fahra un gahn in eier si don gahn sie all dodt."

On en onnerie tzeit sin en lot boowa ous un nei galoffa darich der gottesdinsht, no hot er sich tzu da made gadraht un hot g'sawt; "Made, eich will ich en roth gewwa, heiert kenner fon denna boowa, die hen's on da neera un lava net long."

* * *

A grosser fahler hot der Dissinger kot er hot gamahnt die Evangalish Gamah wer die aintzich os recht is un die onera secta sin all letz. Die onera war'n die si—sei glieder war'n die shofe. "Shofe un si bossa net tzomma, bakoert eich un kumma river in der shofe shtall," hot er als gabredicht. Er war gons wiedich gaga die fashons; er hot net howwa wolla os sei fraw sich en neier hut griega soll wie mole ihr hut alt un ous shtyle war. Sie is no ganga un hot en alter eck—shonk ferkauft for gelt tzu raisa for sich en "shpring hat" tzu kaufa. Mol a Sundawg morga hot er gaga die fashions ga'bredicht yusht wie sei fraw in die kerch kumma is mit ihrm Neia hut uf—"Dort komt my Fraw mit Eckshonk ul em kop", hot er rous ga'grisha.

Die brandawei siffer hot er als ous gabutzt. Er hot g'sawt der dei'wl dade sie usa for shoo-butzer in der hell. "Guck sie yusht mol recht aaw, sie hen nais wie grossa roda peffer, ohra wie Fasnacht kucha, beich wie berl fesser un sie macha g'sichter wie wie en fuchs won er en weshpanesht frest."

Er hot druf g'shtonna die bredicher fon onera kercha sin net bakoert. Er hot sie oft b'shimpft un hot oft baglawgt os die sach so is. "Won die porra all bakoert wahrn was kent mer en armai ous uns all macha; won sie all die rechta flinta hetta un dada tzomma shticka don kent mer em dei'wl es gevelend fon der hell nei shiesa". "Ow'r die kollege bredicher mit ihra holler flinta un ihra babier kugla (ihr ob g'schriwna bredicher) kenna em dei'wl ken hoar fom schwantz ob shiesa, un unnich so bredicha gaht der dei'wl selver in die kerch un nembt en front sitz un gaht shlofa."

En fraw hot mol go'glawgt, die porra dada sie net b'sucha kumma. Der Mose hot wol gawist os niemond he gonga is wile sie so drekich war, ow'r er hot gedenkt er will ihr die oehr aw du un is sie b'sucha gonga mit der obsicht os er sie ferleicht bissel sauverichkeit lerna kent. Wie sie sich on der dish kocht hen for mittawg essa hot der Mose gabate, "Gott sagna die dreckish fraw; un Gott sagna der orum Mose os es essa muss."

Er hot mol en longie fersomlung kalta do in Allentown; no wie er fort is hot er g'sawt, "Now will ich du was der dei'wl sei lava noch net tzu eich gadu hot—ich will eich ferlossa."

Der Mose Dissinger war en guder match tzum Billy Sunday--yusht os er deutsch gabredicht hot un der Billy anglish. In mei'm nagshda brief will ich der Billy uf schreiva. Es ledshd os ich der Mose hoehra hab bredicha war in 1878 in Schlatington. In 1879 is er noch Kansas ga'zoga wo er g'shtorba is in 1883, about 60 yohr alt.

## REMEMBERED

In 1954, Lawrence W. Althouse, a student at the United Theology Seminary of the E.U.B. Church, Dayton, Ohio, corresponded with a number of persons concerning Mose. Some of the letters which he received are in the hands of

the Reverend Gordon A. Oswald of Palmerton, Pa. with whose approval I am quoting from them.

A letter from Altadena, California:

"A man came to Mose with this story: 'A man that attends your church, I think has stolen a calf of mine and I want proof of the fact.'

"The following Sunday Mose appeared in the pulpit with a rock as large as a goose egg, and set it on the pulpit.

"He said, 'Now there is a man here that stole a calf and I am going to throw this rock right at him.' The man's wife said to him in Penna. Dutch, 'Duck down; he will throw it just as sure as the world.' And the man ducked."

* * *

"Another pastor asked Mose if he had a successful year in the ministry. He said 'Yes, very much so; I got $300 above my salary.' "

* * *

"One Sunday he appeared in the pulpit with a black walnut. He said, 'Now, this nut represents three churches. Then taking off the outer black covering, he said, 'This is the Lutheran Church—this is no good; we will throw it away.'

"He cracked the nut and said, 'This hard shell is the Methodist church; that also is no good, so we will throw it away; but now this kernel is our church.' The joke was, it was shriveled and decayed."

* * *

"As you know Mose was once a clown by trade."

* * *

*A letter from Sinking Springs, Pa.*

"Mose was sent by conference to a particularly hard field. He began his introductory sermon with the words: 'I know that I am not your choice, neither are you mine.' "

* * *

*A letter from Bluffton, Ohio:*

The following, apparently, is a quotation from a book (1948) when Fleetwood celebrated its Diamond Jubilee:

"A colorful Evangelical Minister was the Rev. Mose Dissinger whose sermons were delivered with Billy Sunday eloquence. He had to contend with the 'Bully Boys', a group of young men from the town, who could sing louder than the rest of the gathered congregation and who could say 'Amen' louder than all of the others. It is related that the Rev. Dissinger carried a club with him to the pulpit and when too much raucousness prevailed, he would leave the pulpit and brandish his club until the boys were subdued and the noise had subsided. From this point he would again take up the sermon at the point of interruption.

"It is also related that Mrs. Dissinger sold one of her household items with which she bought a hat, much to the displeasure of her husband. When she appeared in church the following Sunday, the Rev. Dissinger, from his pulpit pointed to his wife and said, 'Do Kumt de Mommy Dissinger mit em Eckshunk uf em Kupfh [Here comes Mother Dissinger with the corner cupboard on her head.]' There are many rare stories about this man and many of them are supported with evidence."

* * *

"As a boy and young man I lived with my parents in Fleetwood from 1893 to 1911 and knew some of the members of Rev. Dissinger's church, and they related some of the following remarks to my father.

"He was a powerfully built man and he was always welcome at a barn raising where heavy lifting was required. In Fleetwood he was at such a gathering. He was very fond of potatoes and they put an extra large potato in a bowl in front of him. He was asked to give thanks and said, 'God be thanked for the nice and large potatoes,' and thereupon he stuck his fork in the largest one, and took it to his plate saying, 'You big fellow, come to me.'

"His members were always late at prayer meeting which irked him quite a bit. One evening he and his wife

started the meeting on time and ended it with no one there. On their way home they met the members coming to the meeting, who looked at Mose in surprise and asked where he was going. He answered, 'Home! Prayer meeting is over!' "

* * *

The following stories were collected by William J. Rupp:

Mose was preaching in a campmeeting near Catasauqua, or Schoenersville, Lehigh County, and had been told that the people in that region were "arrick Gottlos" and did not believe in a real hell. In his sermon Mose called attention to the many blast furnaces then going along the Lehigh River, flames spouting from them and reddening the skies at night so that they could be seen from afar. He said that everyone knew how hot it was there, but hell was far worse. "Won m'r en glaener, yunger Deiwel ous da Hell nemma dade un dade ihn in so'n fernace shmeissa wear er in paar secunda ferfrora, so haes is es in da Hell! [If you took a young Devil out of hell and threw him into one of those furnaces he would freeze in a few seconds, that's how hot hell is!]"

Again, at a meeting Mose was greatly annoyed by some young women who repeatedly left the meetinghouse and then came back in after a while. During his sermon they marched out again and created a mild disturbance. Mose watched them go and then said to the congregation, "Mei liewa leit, ihr misst sella yunga maed fergewwa. Fergesst nat, des is in da wossermelona tzeit! [My good people, you must forgive those young women. Remember, this is the watermelon season!]."

And then again the ubiquitous story, which has appeared in so many places and so many forms. Some Allentown lawyers met Mose in front of the old Koch Brothers Store and decided to tease him about his favorite theme and so have some fun at his expense. "Mose," they asked,

"Wie is don der Deiwel heit?" Mose replied, "Oi, des macht mich doch so froh won kinner froga noch ihrem fadder!"

We met with two persons who had seen and shaken hands with Mose: Reverend Charles Elwood Hess, a retired preacher of the Evangelical Church, aged 94 years and Charles Guildner of Middle Creek Church, Kunkletown, R. D. 1, aged 99 years. Both are well preserved with good recollections.

## TWO NONAGENARIANS

Reverend Hess has written about Mose:

"After Moses Dissinger was a year in Philadelphia and reported to the Annual Conference a fellow minister asked how he had fared. He answered forthwith: 'Di Schulde sin bezahlt, un dar Deiwel geleddert un dar Sack foll Geld [Debts all paid; the devil beaten up; and the pocket full of money].' "

"There was nobody like Mose Dissinger; he preached in Pennsylvania German; he followed no pattern.

"His wife taught him to read and write.

"Moses went to Kansas because there was a great fever to go West. But in Kansas he was not the Mose Dissinger of Pennsylvania. He became afflicted with intermittent rheumatism and suffered very much before his death.

"When he was appointed to minister in Allentown, in his introductory sermon, he said: 'I know that you don't want me but you do not know that I did not want you either. Now, that we are together, let us worship together.' He was kept as Pastor for three years—the full time of a pastorate. After the last sermon he said: 'Nau ferloss ich eich, awwar dar Deiwel nedd [Now I will leave you; but the devil won't].' In Slatington, at a revival service, a drunken man came and knelt at the altar. Dissinger knelt on the inside of the altar and grabbed the man's shoulders with both hands and shook the man vigorously and com-

manded him to pray sincerely for the forgiveness of his sins."

* * *

"When Moses Dissinger preached, the area now covered by the spreading town of Palmerton, was woodland, farms and farm buildings and small hamlets. One of his appointments was known as the White or Snyder's Church (the church and cemetery now in the middle of Palmerton.) It was winter and Moses had preached in the afternoon at the White Church. He had a long walk and came very late to the church. He entered the meeting house and immediately made for the pulpit and as he went he repeated, "Guhd Fuhder! Guhd Fuhder! Guhd Fuhder! [Good feeding! Good Feeding! Good Feeding!]"

* * *

"Moses liked good swift horses. One day his horse broke loose and went flying down the street. And as Moses watched him going down the street he said to a neighbor, 'gehs ar net schee. Hot ar awwar net di fiess haddich uffkohwe [Wasn't he nimble on his feet].' "

Rev. Hess says that the first time he saw 'Mose' was at a campmeeting between Danielsville and Berlinsville, at the place now used as a public park.

The tents were arranged so as to form an open square with the preacher's platform. To one side of the platform there was an opening for the people to go in and out.

He became separated from his parents and got close to the opening and he could look in and see the proceedings. Mose was preaching; some of the listeners had fallen asleep. Mose kept pounding away. All of a sudden he jumped up into the air. In coming down he hit a knot in a board on the platform and broke through to the ground; but he bounded back to a solid footing and cried out, "Gott sei Dank ass es net in die Hell gange is [God be thanked—It didn't go down into Hell]."

This awoke the sleepers and they listened again carefully.

* * *

When Moses was ready to leave for Kansas, he visited different churches to bid farewell. In one church he said, "Den Nohwed hawwich fuffzich Text auszugewe ]This evening I have fifty texts to announce]."

He stayed over night with another minister at Leesport. After being in bed a short time Moses jumped out of bed and went to a corner of the room and stood on his head. Moses said; "Da Ferschtand is ma in di Fiess gange; ich wills widdar zurick in da Kobb bringe [My understanding has gone into my feet; now to get it back into my head]."

* * *

Moses was holding revival meetings. One evening three fellows came into the meeting house, sat up front and spat against the pulpit. Mose went and asked them "Do you want something?"

"Yes!"

"What!"

"We want to see a miracle."

To this Mose answered, "We don't perform miracles here, but we cast out [devils]."

There was a friend to Mose in the audience, a blacksmith who was very strong. Mose motioned to him to come up to the pulpit. He came and then the two started upon the three disturbers and cast them bodily out of the meeting house.

* * *

To a group that was disturbing his meeting, he threatened, "Wann Dar eich net beheeft kumm ich zurick un schmeis eich zu die Karrich naus [If you don't behave I'll come back where you are and throw you out of the church]."

Mose preached with a strong voice, but when he prolonged his preaching he passed into a sing-song style, which

became tedious to the listeners and the unruly would turn to mischief making.

* * *

Bishop Bowman was in Kansas while Mose was there. Together they visited a member's family. The host brought a bowl of big "Fallywalders" apples. The bishop took one and ate it and so did Mose.

After a bit, laying his hand on his stomach, Mose said, "Dar is unruhich dar muss Kumpenni hawwe [That one is restless he wants company]." After he had eaten the second, he took a third saying, "Die Zwee sin am Fechde; dar muss nunnar fa Frieda halde [The two are fighting and they need a third to keep the peace].'

"Mose didn't do much writing."

* * *

Mr. Charles "Pappy" Gildner is 99 years old. Cecil P. E. Potteiger in his *Jacob Albright Beyond the Blue Mountains* page 45 writes of him as follows: "Mr. Gildner's mind reflects an early date . . . On many occasions Gildner said he had the privilege of shaking the hand of one of the most colorful preachers the denomination has ever known, the Rev. Moses Dissinger. "Mose" as he is affectionately known in the denomination, preached at Big Creek, a neighboring Carbon County Church, where Mr. Gildner heard him. It is likewise interesting that within the cover of a very old family Bible, Mr. Gildner has a hand made certificate presented to his father and mother by the Rev. Moses Dissinger at the time of their conversion at West Penn Township in Schuylkill County in a protracted meeting there. Mr. Gildner stated that his parents were members of the Lutheran Church prior to that time. The certificate which was signed by Dissinger reads: "Mister John Gildner was Born the 7 day of May 1831 in Lyntwonship, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania and he got converted, 1859 in the betritit (protracted) meeting under Moses Dissinger."

In June 1958 the author, accompanied by Mr. Spencer Wenger, of Egypt, visited Mr. Charles Gildner. We found that his mind "reflects an early date." The Dissinger certificates were copied. They read:

> Mister John Gildner was Boran the 7 of May, 1831 in Lyn Taunship, Lehigh County Pansylvania and that he got convorted 59 in the betracted meeting and der Moses Dissinger.
> Misis John Gildner was born the 11 October, 1834 in Wespen Township Schuylkill County, Pansylvania got convorted the same time by Moses Dissinger.

Both of these certificates may have been written by Moses. He had a bright mind and it should not have required an overly long time or overly hard effort for him to learn to read and write.

Notes taken at an interview with Mr. Gildner:

"Mose went to Kansas weils zu Englisch warre is un ar hot net garn English geschwetzt [Mose went to Kansas because of the growing use of English and he was averse to speaking English]."

However Moses may have been greatly influenced by the emigration of Easterners to the west. A number of his friends had settled at Jewel, Kansas.

"Moses was powerfully built. He may have weighed upwards of 200 pounds."

Mose was preaching at Slatedale. "Ar is arrick eifrich warre [He became very enthusiastic]." He jumped from the pulpit to the floor and broke through. He jumped back and cried out. "Gott sei Danck ass es net in dar Keller gange is"—"Thank the Lord that I didn't go down into the cellar."

He called the ministers who read their sermons "di richtichi Bawlspaffe [the real priests of Baal]." And expressed the wish "Wann ich juscht moll zu en Karrich foll Bawls-

paffe breddiche kennt [If only I might sometime preach to a church full of priests of Baal]."

Mr. Gildner told of the conversion of his own father and mother to the Evangelical faith. First of all, his uncle who worked for a Lutheran clergyman was converted. Then, his mother, having heard about it, asked his father where Mose Dissinger was preaching, that she would like to hear him. His father added, "I won't go with you to hear Dissinger." She went alone and was converted. Thereupon her husband and other Gildners followed her.

Mose converted a girl at Slatedale. Her family moved from Slatedale to Germansville and Mose lost track of her. After a goodly time he saw her again and upon sight of her he bruskly asked, "Hoscht noch Grischendumm? [Do you still have Christianity]?"

She meekly answered, "Jaw [Yes]"

* * *

Someone stole Moses' sleigh. On the Sunday after he had discovered the theft, Mose picked up two stones, hand-sized, and took them along. He went into the church and put one on either side of the Bible. Then he addressed the people: "Nau mei liewe Freind, ebber in die Karrich hot mei Schlidde gschtohle un wann ar's net bekennt schmeis ich en Schtee an ihr [Now, my good friends, someone in the church has stolen my sleigh and if he doesn't admit his theft, I'll throw this stone at him]." There was silence and Mose took one of the stones and threw his arm back and then a woman's voice broke the silence, "Pete, bieg dich; ar schmeist dich gewiss [Pete, bend down, he will surely hit you]."

Isaac Stahl, now in the Frederick Mennonite Home, Frederick, Pa., tells of Mose:

"Em Mose Dissinger sei Weeje hen genumme fun ihm. Annre Breddicher hen ihm noch mache well awwar es

hot net gennumme. Dar Mose hot grawd raus gsawt, 'Wann da eich net bekehrt kummt da in di Helle.' Annre Parre hens browiert awwar net duh kenne [Mose Dissinger and his ways were accepted by the people. Other preachers tried to imitate him and came out at the short end. Moses struck from the shoulder. 'If you are not converted you will go to Hell.' Others tried the same method and missed out]."

"Old Rev. Kind told that Mose in blasting intemperance, said: 'Es gebt Leit, sie saufe sich foll un mache Gsichta wie di Fix wann sie Weschbe gesse hen [There are persons who drink until they are drunk, all the time making faces like foxes after they have eaten wasps]."

"The church in Allentown was on Linden Street. When the congregation moved uptown the pulpit was taken up to the camp meeting grounds near Zionsville.

"Rev. Fred Dissinger, son of Mose came east and was invited to preach at the camp meeting. (See photo). He opened his discourse thus 'What an honor to preach from the pulpit which my father occupied, from which he raised his hands and arms, upon which he pounded so powerfully,' and here he brought both hands down upon the pulpit with great force, and in that moment brought with telling effect the image of his father to the thrilled audience."

Fred, the son of Moses preached at Milford camp meeting. "Ar hot gebreddicht un geguckt grawd wie sei Dawdi [In his appearance and in his preaching, he was the image of his father]." (See photo).

"In the days of Dissinger, preachers went from place to place on foot, or by sulky, or on horseback. I never heard of Mose riding or driving."

"Mose stopped off at a home along his way. The family belonged to his church. Immediately the woman set the

table. As she prepared the meal she spoke depreciatingly of her food. This wasn't right; that wasn't right; that had no taste; another dish was overdone and kept on and on in that vein.

"Finally Moses rose up to leave, saying, "You say your food is no good. If that's so, I don't want to eat it."

Isaac Stahl, formerly of Stahl's Pottery in Powder Valley below Zionsville, Pa., tells this story: Mose had been a servant on the John Steinmetz farm at Schaefferstown at the time of his conversion and for several years therafter. John Steinmetz was an elder in the Reformed Church of Schaefferstown and was highly esteemed for his piety and uprightness.

After Mose had become an active minister in the Evangelical Association he left Schaefferstown and only at long intervals came back to visit the scene of his youth. Sometime after he had taken to the wearing of a high hat and long coat he came back.

He' went to see the Steinmetz family. He came upon John Steinmetz at work in the barnyard loading a wagon with manure to spread upon the fields. Mose greeted Steinmetz but his greeting was not acknowledged. Again he greeted him, and again there was no recognition on the part of Steinmetz who continued with his work as if he were totally unaware of the presence of any other.

Mose'went to the house where he received a warm greeting from Mrs. Steinmetz. Then he told of his experience with her husband. Thereupon she went along with Mose out into the barnyard.

"John," she said to her husband, "John, here is Mose, our Mose," but no sign of recognition from her husband as he kept on with his work. "John,"she continued, "don't you know our Mose anymore—Mose Dissinger."

Steinmetz stopped working, looked Mose over, and then turned to his wife and said, "Mose Dissinger who worked

for me and ate at my table, I know, and he was a good man; but Mose Dissinger with a high hat and long coat, I do not know."

Mose was ready with a reply. "The Scriptures," he said, "say that the road into Heaven is narrow and I suppose Mose Dissinger with his high hat and long coat can slip through better than one who wears a broad-brimmed hat and a wide coat."

According to Stahl, Steinmetz at the time wore a broad-brimmed hat and a short heavy coat. Thereafter they were friends again.

The story bears the imprint of authenticity, and probably was brought into the Powder Valley region by Mose himself. (See *Pennsylvania German Folk Tales,* by Thomas R. Brendle and William S. Troxell, Norristown, 1944, pp. 223, 24).

### REVEREND MOSES DISSINGER*

"There are no two persons exactly alike. There is always something to distinguish everybody from everybody else. There are some people who are so peculiar that no one else seems to be like them in any sense. Their ways, speech, and everything about them seem to belong only to them. Because their ways are so different from the usual ways of other people they are said to be eccentric. Their eccentricity may be very entertaining, or it may be very unpleasant, but in either case they are singular and unusual in their actions.

"Moses Dissinger was one of those eccentric men. He had his own way of doing things. When a boy, he was known throughout the neighborhood for his restless, active, jovial, rough manners. He seemed to fear nothing,

* This is the earliest printed account of "Mose" that is known to the writer. It appeared shortly after his death in the Sunday-school *Messenger,* October 1, 1885.

and the most dangerous feats were his most enjoyable pastimes.

"When Moses was eighteen years old he attended the preaching services of the Evangelical Association. Although he was so rough and wild, the precious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ found its way in his heart, and melted it into repentance. He began to call on God and ceased not until his sins were forgiven for Jesus' sake. His piteous cries for mercy were heard throughout the day, while he was at his work, as well as in the revival meetings. He was digging a cellar at the time, and with every shovelful of earth he threw out he cried, "God, be merciful to me." At last he found peace of heart and mind which God gives to the truly penitent and believing. Soon afterward he became a member of the Evangelical Association. Many prophesied that he would not hold out. They said, "Wait until the next party, or frolic, and then we shall see what will become of Mose's religion." But he did hold out and became an earnest worker for God through all his life.

"From the day of his conversion a new life opened up before this young man. We shudder to think of what might have become of him if he had not become a Christian in his younger days. After he gave his heart to God, he also gave his life to him. It was not long until the class of which he was a member saw that he had talents that ought to be given to the ministry of the Gospel. He was entrusted in turn with the offices of exhorter and class leader. The people saw that the lion had been turned into a lamb. They called him a fanatic, but he cared nothing for that. He meant to serve God, and he did, without respect to what he was called.

"In 1854, the East Pennsylvania Conference licensed Bro. Dissinger to preach the Gospel. He served two years as local preacher, and then entered the itinerant ranks in which he rendered faithful service for twenty-seven years, twenty-three years of that time were spent in the East

Pennsylvania Conference, and four years (from 1879) in the Kansas Conference.

"Bro. Dissinger's sermons, like his manner of life, were peculiar to himself. The truth he preached was the same, but the manner in which he preached it could not be imitated by anyone else. He was faithful and earnest in the way, and, although he delighted in being odd, yet he accomplished much good. His usefulness might have been greater and continued longer if he had tried to overcome his peculiarities a little more. Some of his best sermons were those in which he was careful to avoid the odd forms of expression.

"This remarkable man was born in Schaefferstown, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania on the 17th of March 1824. After much suffering he died in peace, January 25, 1883, in Douglas County, Kansas, in the 59th year of his age.

"In reading about the lives of others we should always have two things in view. We should study to become better by copying their virtues, and to avoid their failures by avoiding their mistakes."

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

LIST OF WRITINGS FROM WHICH WE HAVE DRAWN FREELY AND COPIOUSLY:

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2. *A Brief Biography of Moses Dissinger, Preacher of the Evangelical Association,* by Henry Stetzel, Allentown, Pa., 1892. This is an English version of No. I. It apparently was published later than No. 1 for there are corrections, for the better, in the spelling of dialect words.

3. There is an undated clipping from the *Ev. Familien Freund* in the author's collection which is a "Biographie des Evang. Predigers Moses Dissinger." Probable date, 1890.

4. *A Brief History of Schaefferstown,* by A. S. Brendle, Esq., Dispatch Publishing Co., York, Pa., 1901. The book is rich in authentic historical material about Schaefferstown and its inhabitants. Of Mose the author writes:

> Rev. Dissinger was a true Boanerges—a man of strong convictions and fearless in their utterance. He studied the Bible with great diligence and committed numerous passages of Scripture to memory; and in his sermons which were always practical and to the point, he lashed the vices and foibles of the times with unsparing hand. No one ever denounced the hollow pretences of religion, no matter in what garb they presented themselves, in stronger terms than he.

During the Civil War, being an intense Unionist, he rendered untold service to the national cause by exposing and condemning the wickedness of the Copperheads and rebel sympathizers on every suitable occasion." Page 59

5. A reprint of Stetzel's Biography of Moses Dissinger was published in 1901 by Isaac Iba, of Schaefferstown, Pennsylvania.

6. *The Life and Labors of John Seybert,* First Bishop of the Evangelical Association by Rev. S. P. Spreng. Cleveland, Ohio, 1888. page 328.

In the spring of 1856, Bishop Seybert held the East and Central Pennsylvania conferences. At the session of the former that famous eccentric and powerful preacher, Moses Dissinger was one of the class of eleven who were ordained deacons.

7. *Reminiscences* by Rev. William Yost, Preacher of the Evangelical Association, Second Edition Revised, Cleveland, Ohio, 1911, 303 pages. The writer has not seen a first edition of Yost's work. The Rev. Samuel P. Spreng wrote the introduction, the second paragraph of which refers to Mose:

Among other chapters of rare interest and value, there is one of peculiar pertinence on the original characteristics and unique eccentricities of that remarkable Pennsylvania German Preacher, Moses Dissinger. No other man is so well qualified for this work as Rev. William Yost, who was Dissinger's warm friend through many years of conference relationship, and no man could more keenly appreciate or more truly interpret the witticisms and inimitable drolleries of that marvelous man than Bro. Yost whose own genius for wit and humor is one of his delightful qualities. This chapter alone is worth the price of the book, not because of its spice but because it rescues

from comparative obscurity one who deserves to be better known and remembered than has been the case."

Yost's chapter on Mose is very good. However he is not clear in his account of how Mose learned to read and write: "At quarterly meeting and revival meetings in my home church he, Mose, would always make my father's house his stopping place. His education having been greatly neglected, he could neither read nor write. After his conversion he recognized the necessity of learning to read the Word of God. He at once resolved to use all the time he could spare from his daily work, in learning to read." That agrees with the traditions extant in the Schaefferstown community.

Then Yost continues and beclouds the above statement: "When stopping at my father's house I would instruct him for hours in the art of reading the German Bible, he being very eager to be able to read the blessed Word of God. In a short time he could read tolerably well. At writing he never made progress, I doubt that he ever wrote a letter."

Yost's chapter on Mose is a valuable addition to Stetzel's biography.

8. *A Lebanon County Old Time Backwoods Preacher,* by Prof. H. H. Shenk, Annville, Pa., A paper read before the Lebanon County Historical Society, Dec. 17, 1915. Published by S. Neitz Dissinger, Mauch Chunk, Pa., March 2, 1939.

The publication has a picture of "Mose"—bald headed, with a wide forehead, friendly eyes and wide, friendly mouth.

In the introduction: "A Word from the Publisher," the Rev. A Stapeltown, historian of the Evangelical Church is quoted in regards to Mose.

> This man was in some respects unrivaled in the church. He was the very embodiment of peculiarities.

His manners, speech, sermons, everything about him, bore the stamp of his marked individuality. Not withstanding his irresistible humor and grotesque manner he was a good preacher and a highly useful man. . . . An interesting volume might be written about this eccentric son of the church, whose quaint manners and sayings will long be the theme of conversation around thousands of firesides. He was a strong advocate of temperance and his discourses on that subject were unique and very effective. During the Civil War he was a radical unionist, and delivered numerous speeches in support of the administration. He was fearless, brave and patriotic, a foe of sin and evil of every kind and his memory will ever be remembered in the Church.

10. *History of the Dissinger Family, 1660-1930,* by James L. Dissinger historian of the Dissinger family. This is a historical souvenir distributed at the Tenth Anniversary meeting of the Dissingers at Ephrata Park, Ephrata, Pa., on September 20, 1931. It contains a good treatment on the earliest known Dissinger ancestors, a sketch of Rev. Peter Mischler and also one of Jacob Vogelsang. Nothing on Moses.

11. *Pennsylvania German Folk Tales* by Thomas R. Brendle and William S. Troxell, Norristown, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania German Society, 1944. Pp. 215-224, contain a goodly collection of Dissinger stories under the title, "Moses Dissinger, Who was Always and Everywhere Himself,—The Lorenzo Row of the Pennsylvania Dutch."

12. *Rev. Moses Dissinger, Evangelist and Patriot,* by T. R. Brendle. This, a quite lengthy article, appeared in the "Allentown Morning Call" Allentown, Pa., on October 13, 1929.

13. *Stories and Reminiscences of Eben Holben,* Vol. 1, 1902, Second Volume will be ready January 1, 1903. E. F.

Ochs & Bro. Publishers, Allentown Pa. A collection of stories among which are a number about Mose. Mr. Holben had collected stories for a second Volume, but this was never published. That collection is now in the possession of the author. There are a number of Dissinger stories and these are reproduced above.

14. *A History of the Evangelical Church,* by Raymond W. Albright, Harrisburg, Pa. The Evangelical Press, 1942. for "Mose" see pages 286, 287.

15. *A Lebanon County Old Time Backwoods Preacher* by Prof. H. H. Shenk. Read before the Lebanon County Historical Society, December 17, 1915. No. 16 of Vol. VI of the Publications of the Society.

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3930